

GINGER.

Mr. F. W. Thomas, in his suggestive little note on 'Ορβανός = Rāvaṇa, has incidentally referred to the question as to the origin of the Sanskrit name of the ginger root, *śṛṅgavera*, deriving it from the town Śṛṅgavera. Had we not better say that the town of Śṛṅgaverapura, as it is properly named, has been called after the plant, just as, e.g., Tulsipur in Oudh owes its name to the plant called *tulasī*

<sup>1</sup> "Taxila" in the passage quoted is, no doubt, due to a slip of the pen.

(holy basil)? The name of the plant, as explained in Uhlenbeck's Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary (1898), seems to be a compound made up of *śṛṅgam*, 'horn,' and *veras*, 'shape,' and therefore denoting 'horn-shaped.' There exists, however, another form, with an *i* in the second syllable, viz. Pāli *siṅgivera*, which is important as lying at the bottom of Gr. *ζιγγίβερυς*, from which the other European designations of ginger are derived. Franke, in his valuable list of Greek words of Pāli origin (Z.D.M.G. 1893, p. 600), has pointed out that *ζιγγίβερυς* is more nearly related to *siṅgivera* than to *śṛṅgavera*, in the same way as, e.g., *σάκχαρον*, *saccharum* ('sugar'), corresponds to Pāli *sakkharā*, not to Skt. *śarkarā*. I have lately come across the Sanskrit prototype of *siṅgivera* in *śṛṅgivera*, which, though not given in any Sanskrit dictionary, is found in a great many recipes contained in an ancient medical work, the *Bheḍasaṃhitā* (pp. 176, 189, 213, 226, 230, etc.), a copy of which was kindly lent to me by Dr. P. Cordier, who has informed me since that the original Telinga MS. from which his Devanāgarī copy of the *Bheḍasaṃhitā* has been transcribed reads *śṛṅgiberam* for *śṛṅgiveram*. The coincidence of the *b* in this word with the *β* in *ζιγγίβερυς* is striking indeed, though no doubt an Indian *v* may be represented by a Greek *β*, as e.g. in *Jabadios*, the Greek name of the island of Java, *β* having early assumed the sound of *v*.

In discussing 'the Indian *'Ορβανός*,' we must not lose sight of the fact, I think, that *'Ορβανός* generally corresponds to the well-known Latin name *Urbanus*. The influence of this, the usual meaning of *'Ορβανός*, as well as of the Greek word *ὀρφανός* 'an orphan,' on the supposed transformation of *Rāvaṇas* into *'Ορβανός*, might help to account for the unusual transition of Skt. *Rā-* into Gr. *'Ορ-*. Many of the drugs mentioned by *'Ορβανός* are decidedly Indian.

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