

tain produces *huñ-lan* (*Carthamus*) which yields *yen-č'i* ('cosmetic')." All this, of course, is pure fantasy inspired by the homophony of the two words *yen-č'i* ("cosmetic") and *Hiuñ-nu yen-č'i* ("royal consort"). Another etymology propounded by Fu Hou 伏侯 in his *Čuñ hwa ku kin ču* 中華古今注 (tenth century) is no more fortunate: he explains that *yen-č'i* is produced in the country Yen 燕, and is hence styled 燕脂 *yen-č'i* ("sap of Yen"). Yen was one of the small feudal states at the time of the Čou dynasty. This is likewise a philological afterthought, for there is no ancient historical record to the effect that the state of Yen should have produced (exclusively or pre-eminently) *Basella* or *Carthamus*. It is perfectly certain that *yen-č'i* is not Chinese, but the transcription of a foreign word: this appears clearly from the ancient form 燕支, which yields no meaning whatever; 支, as is well known, being a favorite character in the rendering of foreign words. This is further corroborated by the vacillating modes of writing the word, to which Li Ši-čen adds 羶枝,¹ while he rejects as erroneous 燕肢 and 咽支, and justly so. Unfortunately we are not informed as to the country or language from which the word was adopted: the *Ku kin ču* avails itself only of the vague term *Si fañ* ("Western Countries"), where *Carthamus* was called *yen-č'i*; but in no language known to me is there any such name for the designation of this plant or its product. The Sanskrit name for safflower is *kusumbha*; and if the plant had come from India, Chinese writers would certainly not have failed to express this clearly. The supposition therefore remains that it was introduced from some Iranian region, and that *yen-č'i* represents a word from an old Iranian dialect now extinct, or an Iranian word somehow still unknown. The New-Persian name for the plant is *gāwdžila*; in Arabic it is *qurtum*.²

Li Ši-čen distinguishes four kinds of *yen-č'i*: (1) From *Carthamus tinctorius*, the juice of the flowers of which is made into a rouge (the information is chiefly drawn from the *Ku kin ču*, as cited above). (2) From *Basella rubra*, as described in the *Pei hu lu*. (3) From the *šan-liu* 山榴 flower [unidentified, perhaps a wild pomegranate: above, p. 281], described in the *Hu pen ts'ao*. (4) From the tree producing gum lac (*tse-kun* 紫釧),³ this product being styled 胡燕脂 *hu yen-č'i* ("foreign cosmetic") and described in the *Nan hai yao p'u* 南海藥譜 of Li Sün 李珣.⁴ "At present," Li Ši-čen continues, "the southerners

¹ Formed with the classifier 155, "red."

² ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 105.

³ See below, p. 476.

⁴ He lived in the second half of the eighth century.