

fruit on its internal surface. On cutting open a fig when it has attained little more than one-third its size, the flowers will be seen in full development.<sup>1</sup>

The common fig-tree (*Ficus carica*) is no less diffused over the Iranian plateau than the pomegranate. The variety *rupestris* is found in the mountains Kuh-Kiluyeh; and another species, *Ficus johannis*, occurs in Afghanistan between Tebbes and Herat, as well as in Baluchistan.<sup>2</sup> In the mountain districts of the Taurus, Armenia, and in the Iranian table-lands, fig-culture long ago reached a high development. Toward the east it has spread to Khorasan, Herat, Afghanistan, as well as to Merw and Khiwa.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt, either, that the fig was cultivated in Sasanian Persia; for it is mentioned in Pahlavi literature (above, p. 192), and we have a formal testimony to this effect in the Annals of the Liang dynasty, which ascribe *udambara* to Po-se (Persia) and describe the blossoms as charming.<sup>4</sup> In India, as stated, this term refers to *Ficus glomerata*; in China, however, it appears to be also used for *Ficus carica*. Hūan Tsai<sup>5</sup> enumerates *udambara* among the fruits of India.

Strabo<sup>6</sup> states that in Hyrcania (in Bactria) each fig-tree annually produced sixty medimni (one bushel and a half) of fruit. According to Herodotus,<sup>7</sup> Croesus was dissuaded from his expedition against Cyrus on the plea that the Persians did not even drink wine, but merely water, nor did they have figs for sustenance. This, of course, is an anecdote without historical value, for we know surely enough that the ancient Persians possessed both grapes and wine. Another political anecdote of the Greeks is that of Xerxes, who, by having Attic figs served at his meals, was daily reminded of the fact that the land where they grow was not yet his own. The new discovery of the presence of figs in ancient Babylonia warrants the conclusion that they were likewise known and consumed in ancient Persia.

We have no means of ascertaining as to when and how the fig spread from Iran to China. The *Yu yan tsa tsu* is reticent as to the transmission, and merely describes the tree as existing in Fu-lin and

<sup>1</sup> LINDLEY and MOORE, Treasury of Botany, pt. I, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> C. JORET, Plantes dans l'antiquité, Vol. II, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> G. EISEN, The Fig: Its History, Culture, and Curing, p. 20 (U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, 1901).

<sup>4</sup> *Lian šu*, Ch. 54, p. 14 b. Read *yu-t'an-po* instead of *yu-po-t'an*, as there printed through an oversight.

<sup>5</sup> *Ta T'an si yü ki*, Ch. 2, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> II. I, 14.

<sup>7</sup> I, 71.