

that the designation "Allium of the Hu" is a misnomer, and that the plant in question has nothing to do with the Hu in the sense of Iranians, nor with Persia. The Po-se of Ma Či, referred to above, in fact represents the Malayan Po-se.

68. In the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*, a quotation is given from the *Ku kin ču*, which is not to be found in the accessible modern editions of this work. The assertion is made there with reference to that work that ebony 烏文木 is brought over on Po-se ships. It is out of the question that Po-se in this case could denote Persia, as erroneously assumed by STUART,<sup>1</sup> as Persia was hardly known under that name in the fourth century, when the *Ku kin ču* was written, or is supposed to have been written, by Ts'ui Pao;<sup>2</sup> and, further, ebony is not at all a product of Persia.<sup>3</sup> Since the same work refers ebony to Kiao-čou (Tonking), it may be assumed that this Po-se is intended for the Malayan Po-se; but, even in this case, the passage may be regarded as one of the many interpolations from which the *Ku kin ču* has suffered.

Chinese *wu-men* 烏構 (\*u-mon), "ebony" (timber of *Diospyros ebenum* and *D. melanoxylon*) is not a transcription of Persian *ābnūs*, as proposed by HIRTH.<sup>4</sup> There is no phonetic coincidence whatever. Nowhere is it stated that the Chinese word is Persian or a foreign word at all. There is, further, no evidence to the effect that ebony was ever traded from Persia to China; on the contrary, according to Chinese testimony, it came from Indo-China, the Archipelago, and India; according to Li Ši-čen, from Hai-nan, Yün-nan, and the Southern Barbarians.<sup>5</sup> The speculation that the word had travelled east and west with the article from "one of the Indo-Chinese districts," is untenable; for the ebony of western Asia and Greece did not come from Indo-China, but from Africa and India. The above Chinese term is not a transcription at all: the second character *men* is simply a late substitution of the Sung period for the older 文, as used in the *Ku kin ču*, *wu wen* meaning "black-streaked wood." In the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*<sup>6</sup> it is said

<sup>1</sup> Chinese Materia Medica, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Persia under the name Po-se is first mentioned in A.D. 461, on the occasion of an embassy sent from there to the Court of the Wei (compare above, p. 471).

<sup>3</sup> It was solely imported into Persia (W. OUSELEY, Oriental Geography of Ebn Haukal, p. 133).

<sup>4</sup> Chau Ju-kua, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> The *Ko ku yao lun* (Ch. 8, p. 5 b; ed. of *Si yin huan ts'un šu*) gives Hai-nan, Nan-fan ("Southern Barbarians"), and Yün-nan as places of provenience, and adds that there is much counterfeit material, dyed artificially. The poles of the tent of the king of Camboja were made of ebony (*Sui šu*, Ch. 82, p. 3).

<sup>6</sup> Ch. 35 B, p. 13.