

PERSIAN TEXTILES

69. Brocades, that is, textiles interwoven with gold or silver threads, were manufactured in Irān at an early date. Gold rugs are mentioned in the Avesta (*zaranaēne upasterene*, Yašt xv, 2). Xerxes is said to have presented to citizens of Abdera a tiara interwoven with gold.¹ The historians of Alexander give frequent examples of such cloth in Persia.² Pliny,³ speaking of gold textiles of the Romans, traces this art to the Attalic textures, and stamps it as an invention of the kings of Asia (*Attalicis vero iam pridem intexitur, invento regum Asiae*).⁴ The accounts of the ancients are signally confirmed by the Chinese.

Persian brocades 波斯錦 are mentioned in the Annals of the Liang as having been sent as tribute in A.D. 520 to the Emperor Wu from the country Hwa 滑.⁵ The king of Persia wore a cloak of brocade, and brocades were manufactured in the country.⁶ Textiles woven with gold threads 金縷織成 are expressly mentioned;⁷ this term almost reads like a translation of Persian *zar-bāf* (literally, "gold weaving").⁸ Persian brocades, together with cotton stuffs from An-si (Parthia) 安西白疊, are further mentioned at the time of the Emperor Ši Tsun 世宗 (A.D. 954-958) of the Hou Čou dynasty, among tribute-gifts sent from Kwa čou 瓜州 in Kan-su.⁹ The Kirgiz received precious materials for the dress of their women from An-si (Parthia), Pei-t'ing 北廷 (Bišbalik, in Turkistan), and the Ta-ši 大食 (Tadžik, the Arabs). The Arabs made pieces of brocade of such size that the weight of each equalled that of twenty camel-loads. Accordingly these large pieces were cut up into

¹ Herodotus, VIII, 120.

² YATES, *Textrinum Antiquorum*, pp. 366-368.

³ XXXIII, 19, § 63.

⁴ At the Court of the Persian kings there was a special atelier for the weaving of silken, gold, and silver fabrics,—styled *siār bāf xāne* (E. KAEMPFER, *Amoenitatum exoticarum fasciculi* V, p. 128, Lemgoviae, 1712).

⁵ *Lian šu*, Ch. 54, p. 13 b. Hwa is the name under which the Ephthalites first appear in Chinese history (CHAVANNES, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, p. 222).

⁶ *Kiu T'an šu*, Ch. 198, p. 10 b (see also *Lian šu*, Ch. 54, p. 14 b; and *Sui šu* Ch. 83, p. 7 b). Hsuan Tsan refers to brocade in his account of Persia (*Ta T'an si yü ki*, Ch. 11, p. 17 b, ed. of *Šou šan ko ts'un šu*).

⁷ *Sui šu*, l. c.; 金縷錦袍師子錦袴 in *Lian šu*, l. c.

⁸ Cf. Loan-Words in Tibetan, No. 118.

⁹ *Wu tai ši*, Ch. 74, p. 3 b; *Kiu Wu Tai ši*, Ch. 138, p. 1 b.