

text to this effect may be noted here. Ibn al-Faqīh, who wrote in A.D. 902, has this account: "In Kirmān there is wood that is not burnt by fire, but comes out undamaged.¹ A Christian² wanted to commit frauds with such wood by asserting that it was derived from the cross of the Messiah. Christian folks were thus almost led into temptation. A theologian, noting this man, brought them a piece of wood from Kirmān, which was still more impervious to fire than his cross-wood." According to P. SCHWARZ,³ to whom we owe the translation of this passage, the question here is of fossilized forests. Most assuredly, however, asbestos is understood. The above text of the *Wei šu* is thus by far the earliest allusion to asbestos from an Iranian region.

The following notes may serve as additional information to my former contribution. Čou Mi 周密 (1230-1320), in his *Či ya t'an tsa č'ao* 志雅堂雜鈔, mentions asbestine stuffs twice.⁴ In one passage he relates that in his house there was a piece of fire-proof cloth (*hwo hwan pu*) over a foot long, which his maternal grandfather had once obtained in Ts'üan čou 泉州 (Fu-kien Province).⁵ Visitors to his house were entertained by the experiment of placing it on the fire of a brazier. Subsequently Čao Moñ-i 趙孟議 borrowed it from him, but never returned it. In the other text he quotes a certain Ho Ts'in-fu 霍清夫 to the effect that fire-proof cloth is said to represent the fibres of the mineral coal of northern China, burnt and woven, but not the hair of the fire-rodent (salamander). This is accompanied by the comment that coal cannot be wrought into fibres, but that now *pu-hwei-mu* 不灰木 (a kind of asbestos) is found in Pao-tiñ (Či-li).⁶ A brief notice of asbestos is inserted in the *Ko ku yao lun*,⁷ where merely the old fables are reiterated. Information on the asbestos of Či-li Province will be

¹ Qazwīnī adds to this passage, "even if left in fire for several days."

² Qazwīnī speaks in general of charlatans.

³ Iran im Mittelalter, p. 214.

⁴ Ch. A, p. 20 b; and Ch. B, p. 25 b (ed. of *Yüe ya t'an ts'un šu*).

⁵ This locality renders it almost certain that this specimen belonged to those imported by the Arabs into China during the middle ages (p. 331 of my article). The asbestos of Mosul is already mentioned in the *Lin wai tai ta* (Ch. 3, p. 4).

⁶ The term *pu-hwei-mu* ("wood burning without ashes, incombustible wood") appears as early as the Sung period in the *Čen lei pen ts'ao* (Ch. 5, p. 35): it comes from Šan-tañ (south-east portion of Šan-si and part of Ho-nan), and is now found in the Tse-lu mountains 澤潞山. It is a kind of stone, of green and white color, looking like rotten wood, and cannot be consumed by fire. Some call it the root of soapstone.

⁷ Ch. 8, p. 4 (ed. of *Si yin huan ts'un šu*). In Ch. 7, p. 17, there is a notice on *pu-hwei-mu* stone, stated to be a product of Tse-čou and Lu-nan in Šan-si, and employed for lamps.