

by PELLIOU.¹ Pelliot, however, noticed well that what the Chinese describe as *p'o-so* or *mo-so* 摩娑 is not bezoar, and that the transcription is anomalous.² This being the case, it is preferable to reject the identification, and there are other weighty reasons prompting us to do so. There is no Chinese account that tells us that Persia had bezoars or traded bezoars to China. The Chinese were (and are) well acquainted with the bezoar³ (I gathered several in China myself), and bezoars are easy to determine. Now, if *p'o-so* or *mo-so* were to represent Persian *pāzahr* and a Persian bezoar, the Chinese would not for a moment fail to inform us that *p'o-so* is the *Po-se niu-hwan* or Persian bezoar; but they say nothing to this effect. On the contrary, the texts cited under this heading in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*⁴ do not make any mention of Persia, but agree in pointing to the Malay Archipelago as the provenience of the *p'o-so* stone. Ma Či of the Sung assigns it to the Southern Sea (Nan Hai). Li Ši-čen points to the *Keñ sin yü ts'e* 庚辛玉册, written about 1430, as saying that the stone comes from San-fu-ts'i (Palembang on Sumatra).⁵ F. DE MÉLY designates it only as a "pierre d'épreuve," and refers to an identification with aventurine, proposed by Rémusat.⁶ Bezoar is a calculus concretion found in the stomachs of a number of mammals, and Oriental literatures abound in stories regarding such stones extracted from animals. Not only do the Chinese not say that the *p'o-so* stone is of animal origin, but, on the contrary, they state explicitly that it is of mineral origin. The *Keñ sin yü ts'e* relates how mariners passing by a certain mountain on Sumatra break this stone with axes out of the rock, and that the stone when burnt emits a sulphurous odor. Ma Či describes this stone as being green in color and without speckles; those with gold stars, and when rubbed yielding a milky juice, are the best. All this does not fit the bezoar. Also the description in the *Pen ts'ao yen i*⁷ refers only to a stone of mineral origin.

¹ *T'oung Pao*, 1912, p. 438.

² The initial of the Persian word would require a labial surd in Chinese. Whether the *p'o-sa* 婆薩 of the *Pei hu lu* belongs here is doubtful to me; it is not explained what this stone is. As admitted in the *Pen ts'ao yen i* (Ch. 4, p. 4 b), the form *mo-so* is secondary.

³ It is first mentioned in the ancient work *Pie lu*, then in the *Wu ši pen ts'ao* of the third century, and by T'ao Huñ-kiñ.

⁴ Ch. 10, p. 10 b.

⁵ This text is cited in the same manner in the *Tuñ si yan k'ao* of 1618 (Ch. 3, p. 10). Cf. F. DE MÉLY, *Lapidaire chinois*, p. 120.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. LXIV, 260.

⁷ Ch. 4, p. 4 b (ed. of Lu Sin-yüan).