

A. Rémusat attached to his *Histoire de la Ville de Khotan* the learned treatise in which the historical notices relating to the stone and its extensive use were for the first time clearly traced⁸. A reference to these researches, and to the useful data which Ritter added to them, will suffice to explain the great importance which must be claimed for the mineral in the economic history of Khotan⁹. Apart from the direct profits which its export, continued during thousands of years, must have carried to the oasis, it is clear that it must always have acted as a powerful factor for drawing trade to Khotan.

The advantages which jade offered for commercial investments, owing to its portable nature, its relatively high price, and its assured market in China, were certain to be appreciated both by merchants from China trading westwards and by foreign traders proceeding to the Middle Kingdom. It is only necessary to recall the enormous distances and the natural difficulties of caravan journeys from the interior of China to either the Tārīm or Oxus, in order to realize how important it must have been for the Chinese merchants, who during the Han period and later carried their goods to Central Asia, to invest their sale profits in merchandise which, like jade, admitted of easy transport and was safe from deterioration in transit.

That the same was true also for the Western traders proceeding to China is a fact attested by a classical witness. Benedict Goëz, who on his memorable journey to discover Cathay proved his capacity as a sensible man of business quite as much perhaps as his missionary zeal, when describing his long stay at Hiarchan or Yarkand in 1603-4, tells us: 'There is no article of traffic more valuable, or more generally adopted as an investment for this journey, than lumps of a certain transparent kind of marble which we, from poverty of language, usually call jasper. They carry these to the Emperor of Cathay, attracted by the high prices which he deems it obligatory on his dignity to give; and such pieces as the Emperor does not fancy they are free to dispose of to private individuals. The profit on these transactions is so great that it is thought to compensate for all the fatigue and expense of the journey. . . . These marbles (with which the empire is now overflowing) are called by the Chinese *Iusce*¹⁰.

Sericulture deserves to be mentioned next among the industries of Khotan, in view of its antiquity and continued importance. Khotan is the chief silk-producing district of the Tārīm Basin, and probably of the whole of Turkestan. The produce, which in one form or another affords occupation to the bulk of the population, is nowadays chiefly exported in the form of spun silk. But the weaving of silk fabrics also flourishes, and must, in view of the Chinese records and of my finds, be considered an ancient industry of the oasis. We shall

⁸ See 'Recherches sur la substance minérale appelée par les Chinois pierre de Iu et sur le Jaspe des anciens', in *Ville de Khotan*, pp. 119-239.

⁹ See Ritter, *Asien*, vol. v. pp. 380 sqq.

¹⁰ See Yule, *Cathay*, ii. p. 564. By *Iusce* is, of course, meant *yü shih*, 'yü stone', the Chinese name of jade. Goëz himself acted up to the commercial advice here conveyed; for he got the loan of some six hundred gold pieces which he had made to the mother of 'the Prince of Quotan' (Khotan), paid back 'in ample measure with pieces of that valuable stone' on a visit he personally paid to Khotan. Before his tragic end at Su-chou on the confines of Kan-su, the brave Jesuit had reason to appreciate the wisdom of this investment; for when 'obliged to dispose of his large piece of jade for little more than half its value', in order to maintain himself and his party during their

detention, 'he got for it twelve hundred pieces of gold'; see Yule, *Cathay*, ii. p. 585.

I may refer here in passing to a modern illustration of the extent to which caravan trade with Eastern Turkestan depends on the possibility of securing easily portable articles for export from the country. Indian trade with Chinese Turkestan flourished after the Forsyth Mission as long as the Hindu merchants engaged in it were able to invest their sale profits on Indian goods in the highly valuable and easily transported *charas* drug. Since the importation of the latter into India has been charged with almost prohibitive duties, the Turkestan trade has considerably declined. In their search for profitable return consignments to replace *charas* the Indian traders are now obliged to turn to Khotan silk; but its supply is far less steady than that of the noxious drug and the profits are by no means so substantial.

Trade stimulated by jade exports.

Ben. Goëz on Khotan jade.

Silk of Khotan.