

for other perfumes. The accounts concerning this «Ambergris Island» seem to be to a great extent legendary. At the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th cent., Mussulman sailors also knew of an «Ambergris Island», *Jazīrāt al-‘Anbar*, the name of which was taken over in 1554 into the *Muḥīṭ* of the Turkish admiral Sīdī ‘Alī Čälābī (*Fe*, 537). Although its location is not easy to determine, it seems to lie far away from the «Ambergris Island» of the Chinese. In European nomenclature, if we leave out the Ambergris Island of the Gulf of Honduras, and also the «Cap d’Ambre» at the northern end of Madagascar, the etymology of which is doubtful (cf. GRANDIDIER, *Hist. de la géogr. de Madagascar*<sup>2</sup>, 69), there is a «capo de ambra» and a «riuo de ambra» in the Egerton ms. of c. 1508 [cf. KAMMERER, *La Mer Rouge*, II, App. I (7)]. Moreover, the name of «Ile d’Ambre» was applied in the 18th cent. to a small island close to Mauritius. In 1744 the *Saint-Géran* was wrecked in its neighbourhood, and that gave BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE part of the subject of *Paul et Virginie*, including the mention of «Ile d’Ambre».

I have still a few words to say on two points. The first is the use of the name of the «dragon» in Chinese. There is in Chinese a regular name of the «whale», 鯨 *ch’ing*, and the texts give a good description of the animal; we know also of several synonyms of *ch’ing*. The notion and the traditional representations of the dragon, *lung*, are totally different. Yet there is no doubt that the monstrous appearance of the huge Cetacea which were sometimes stranded on the coasts of China suggested to the popular mind an association with the proteiform and mysterious dragon. With some reserves as to the details of the case, I can only concur with what has been said on this point by SCHLEGEL (*TP*, 1895, 38-43), LAUFER (*TP*, 1913, 341-342) and ROCKHILL (*TP*, 1915, 158).

But, and this is the second point, even granting that we may to some extent substitute «whale» for «dragon» in the Chinese texts referring to «ambergris», it is somewhat surprising that the Chinese should have given the name of «spittle» to what is an intestinal product, while on the other hand Western belief attached the name of «whale sperm», *spermaceti*, to a product mostly found in the head of the animal (see «Capdoille»). The explanation of these apparent contradictions seems to me to lie in a confusion which has sometimes been made in China as well as in the West between «ambergris» and *spermaceti*. When a Chinese text of 1520, probably quoting from an earlier source, mentions the boats of the Maldive islands as «caulked with melted ambergris (‘dragon spittle’)», there is a great likelihood that *spermaceti* and oil are actually meant, not «ambergris» (cf. DEVIC, *Le pays des Zendjs*, 226, for such caulking). In English, «white amber» has been used in the sense of *spermaceti*, and in 1598 FLORIO gives the definition «*ambra*, amber, also amber greece, also the sperme of a whale called *Spermaceti*». This confusion is well illustrated by a passage of *Pantagruel* (RABELAIS, ed. LEFRANC, IV, 252) : When Panurge has received from a lady of Paris a letter which looks like a sheet of blank paper, Panurge resorts to various devices to reveal the writing, one being meant to ascertain whether the letter was written «avec sperme de baleine qu’on appelle ambre gris». The confusion must have originated in the East since the *Hsi shih chi* of 1263, the information in which was collected in Persia and is independent from Chinese traditional lore also speaks of «ambergris» as being the sperm of an animal, although the great sea-turtle takes in this case the place of the dragon, or whale, or mysterious *tāl* (?) fish of some Mussulman writers.