

account of the similarity between the capsule of the cotton plant and the cocoon of the silkworm (cf. E. BERNEKER, *Slav. etymol. Wörterbuch*, I, 101). This similarity struck the Chinese too, and is made use of in the first Chinese description of the cotton plant growing in the Turfan region (cf. *infra*, p. 433). The mediaeval use of a name of cotton which resembled, and sometimes was identical with, that of the cocoon of the silkworm has given rise to serious misunderstandings. In his papers on the Comans, RASOVSKIĪ (*Seminarium Kondakovianum*, IX [1937], [Reference ?]) mistakes the *bonbecium* of the *Codex Cumanicus* (KUHNS ed., 92), which is «cotton», as meaning «silkworm». YULE himself, partly following HAKLUYT, II, 60, went astray on this point. When Odoric says that the inhabitants of Cansay (*i. e.* Hang-chou; see «Quinsai») pay every year to the Great Khan a tax of one *balis* (< Pers. *bališt*, «cushion», the Persian name of the silver «shoes» or ingots, *ting*, in the Mongol period), *id est quinque cartas bombicis*, YULE, following moreover a secondary reading which inserts *ad instar* after *cartas*, translated (*Y*<sup>1</sup>, II, 196) «five pieces of paper like silk»; he had clearly forgotten the *opera goton, id est bombicis* of the other passage. In Odoric's time, the *ting* of paper money was again valued at one-fifth of its nominal value in silver; it was only one-tenth in Polo's time.

This leads us to another remark. Just as Odoric speaks of the Chinese paper-money as *cartae bombicis*, Rubrouck says that the usual money in China was *carta de wambasio*. Apart from PAUTHIER (*Pa*, 327), who, reviving an old error of BAYER, *Museum Sinicum*, De litteratura, p. 76, absurdly maintained that *wambasium* meant «bamboo», all the translators and commentators have seen that *wambasium* was the same as *bambacium*, «cotton»; moreover, Rubrouck had said so himself (*de cotone sive wambasio*; cf. *supra*, p. 426; MALEĪN, *Istoriya Mongalov*, 66, was mistaken when he translated the two words as designating two different cotton goods). Consequently, all the translators have spoken of the Chinese paper money as having been made of cotton paper. The tradition of the «cotton paper» is an old one among scholars, but it has been established by KARABAČEK (*Das arabische Papier*, *Mitteil. a. d. Sammlung Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer*, II-III, 43 ss.), KOBERT (*Ueber das älteste in Deutschland Gefindliche echte Papier*, 5, reprinted from *Der Papier-Fabrikant*, Festschrift 1911), and WIESNER (in *Sitz. d. K. Ak. d. Wiss. in Wien*, Ph.-Hist. Kl., vol. 168, 5th Abhandl., 5-6) that cotton never entered into the fabrication of any mediaeval paper. For its use as one of the three constituents of Turkestan paper in the 18th century, cf. LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, 562. As a matter of fact, *carta bombacina*, of which Rubrouck's *carta de wambasio* and Odoric's *carta bombicis* are merely other forms, was a ready-made term which meant nothing more than «paper».

This is not without some importance in the case of the Chinese paper money, because there was not yet very much cotton grown in China, save in Kuang-tung and Fu-chien, in the days of Rubrouck, Polo, and even Odoric. Polo, who speaks of cotton as growing abundantly in Persia, in the western oases of Chinese Turkestan, and in India, does not mention any place in China proper where it was cultivated. A passage which is found only in FB says of the Chinese that «it is true that they have cotton and hemp in some places, but not enough to satisfy them» (Vol. I, 237). As a matter of fact, although cotton had begun to be cultivated in many parts of China when Polo visited that country, most of the cotton goods, and the best ones, were still imported from abroad. But the history of cotton in China, either imported or indigenous, is still far from being elucidated.