

problem of cotton is again involved. LAUFER maintained that cotton was excluded because it was too well known, particularly in China, to be able to give rise to any such tales, and also because there was no reference to lambs in the Chinese documents regarding cotton. I venture to challenge both these lines of argument.

In China, there was so little knowledge in pre-T'ang and T'ang times of what cotton actually was that the Buddhist authors of the *I-ch'ieh ching yin-i* felt it necessary to state over and over again that *po-tieh* (« cotton ») was made of the down of a plant, not of the hair of an animal, as was commonly said in dictionaries. Few people realized that the *po-tieh* of the Turfan region was the same as the *ku-pei* or *chi-pei* of the South Seas. As late as 1461, the official Ming Geography, 明一統志 *Ming i-t'ung chih* (84, 20 a; cf. *Br*, II, 192), speaking of the products of the Turfan region, describes the « *po-tieh* cloth » in almost the same terms as the *Liang shu* and the *Hsin T'ang shu*, but adds that it was made « with cocoons which wild silkworms formed on 苦參 *k'u-shên* (*Sophora angustifolia?*) ». This has been copied afterwards into the « expanded » *Kuang-yü chi* of 1686 (24, 30 b; cf. LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, 492). Even the *Ta-Ch'ing i-t'ung chih* follows in their wake and speaks of the *po-tieh* of Ha-mi (Qomul; see « Camul ») as being made of the « webs » of wild silkworms (this is stated in the *Tz'ü-yüan*, but I cannot find it in the various redactions of the work which are at my disposal, neither COURANT, 1439, COURANT, 1492, nor the modern redaction; I suspect that the *Tz'ü-yüan* copied the *Ko-chih ching-yüan*, 27, 27 a, which merely speaks of the *I-t'ung chih*; this may be the *Ming i-t'ung chih*, with the substitution of Ha-mi for the Huo-chou [Qara-ḥoḥa near Turfan] of the original work). But this is an arbitrary combination of two distinct items of information. The *Liang shu* and subsequent works, including Wang Yen-tê's report of 984, had spoken of the *po-tieh* of Kao-ch'ang, *i. e.* cotton. On the other hand, Wang Yen-tê had stated that at I-chou, *i. e.* Qomul, there were wild silkworms which lived on *k'u-shên*, and from the cocoons of which floss and silk could be made (cf. *Sung shih*, 490, 4 a-b). But Wang Yen-tê never said that this silk was *po-tieh*; the error arose in Ming times. As a consequence of such misstatements, *po-tieh* is given as a silken cloth in the *Tz'ü-yüan*. This shows to what extent even late Chinese sources can go astray as to the true nature of cotton stuff.

When Odoric was in the region of the lower Yang-tzū, he heard a tale about Pygmies, three spans in height, who could do better work of « goton, id est bombacis (var. bombicis) » than any other people in the world. The whole passage remains practically unexplained (cf. CORDIER, *Odoric de Pordenone*, 345-355; *Y*¹, II, 206-208; *Wy*, 468-469; HALLBERG, 418-420; also Maunde-ville, A. LAYARD ed., 1895, 259). Three spans, or, in the Chinese way of measurement, three « feet » is the usual height of Pygmies in both western and Chinese texts (cf. *TP*, 1905, 562). I feel inclined to believe that the tale, far from bearing evidence of the development of cotton cultivation in the region of the lower Yang-tzū, attributed the manufacture of the best cotton stuff to some legendary tribe located along the upper course of the river. And this also would tend to show that, even in the 14th cent., cotton cultivation was not as free from legend as LAUFER imagined.

So much for indirect evidence; but there is also the direct testimony provided by the texts. Even while belittling LEE's « cotton » theory of the *Agnus scythicus*, LAUFER admitted that Odoric's