

whether it was flax or cotton, although the two varieties, white and yellow, would almost speak in favour of the latter. But the main fact remains that βύσσοις could not well have become the usual name of cotton stuff in nomadic Asia unless some similar value had attached to it in the West. So I believe that, from the start, cotton has as good a chance as the *Pinna* to have formed the basis of the twin legend of the « water sheep » and the « earth-born lamb ».

One more point must be raised. The « earth-born lamb » was located in a small district which lay north of Ta-Ch'in and was dependent on it. The lamb was protected by an enclosure; armoured men on horseback had to frighten him by beating drums. The northern location and the noise occur even in late mediaeval stories of the « sowed sheep ». LAUFER's explanation (p. 119) is as follows : « In the original animal fable these cuirassed men were crustacea, the shelly crusts of which were subsequently transmuted into cuirasses; they terrified the pinna, which, taken aback at the sight of the enemy, dropped its byssi. These byssi drifted ashore, where they were picked up by men for the purpose known to us. » Our information is so fragmentary that one cannot be positive *pro* or *contra* any such solution. So it is with great diffidence that I beg to dissent from LAUFER, and to suggest that, in the « earth-born lamb » located north of Ta-ch'in and the armoured men who strove to seize it, we may hear a faint echo of the story of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece.

## 184. COWRIES

<i>krute borgil</i> ( <i>burgil</i> ),	<i>krute porcelane</i> LT, Z	<i>porzelane</i> V, VA
<i>portulaca borgil</i> (c. 157) G	<i>porcellana</i> (-ne) R	<i>porzellana</i> (-ne) V, VA, VB
<i>porcelaine</i> (-s) F	<i>porcellane</i> L, LT, Z	<i>porzellane de mar</i> (c. 157) VA
<i>porcelainnes, pourcelainnes</i> FA	<i>porciellane</i> TA <sup>1</sup> , TA <sup>3</sup>	<i>pourcelainnes</i> FA, FB

Polo speaks of cowries, *Cypraea moneta*, as « porcelainnes »; the origin and the different meanings of this word will be discussed under PORCELAIN.

Much has been written on the cowry and other shells used either as ornament or as currency. The most detailed monographs are those of Oskar SCHNEIDER, *Muschelgeld-Studien*, posthumous edition, Dresden, 1905, 8 v<sup>o</sup>, 191 pages, ill., and of J. W. JACKSON, *Shells as Evidence of the Migrations of early Culture*, Manchester, 1917, 8 v<sup>o</sup> (with an important Introduction by Elliot SMITH). Robert E. C. STEARN's *Ethno-Conchology : a study of primitive money* (in *Report of the National Museum 1886-1887*, 297-334, ill.) is important only for American shells. The best summary is a paper by F. A. SCHILDER, *Die ethnolog. Bedeutung der Porzellanschnecken*, in *Zeitschr. für Ethnologie*, 58 [1926], 313-327 (where, however, JACKSON's work is ignored). Interesting data have also been collected in R. BRIFFAULT, *The Mothers*, London, 1917, 8 v<sup>o</sup>, III, 265-278, and in G. ANDERSSON, *Children of the Yellow Earth*, London, 1936, 8 v<sup>o</sup>, 294-312 and 323-324.