

says that the *Hsiang pei ching* is by «Chu Chung from the earlier Han dynasty», a statement which it seems hard to accept. The work is not mentioned in the bibliographical section of the *Ch'ien-Han shu*; it occurs for the first time in the *Sui shu* (34, 12 a) as an anonymous work which existed in the first half of the 6th century, but was already lost c. A. D. 600; it is again listed, however, in *Chiu T'ang shu* (47, 4 b), *Hsin T'ang shu* (59, 8 a), and *Sung shih* (106, 10 b), where 貝 *pei* is altered to 貝 *chü*), always without name of author. The alleged authorship is deduced from the beginning of the treatise : «朱仲 Chu Chung received it from 琴高 Ch'in Kao. Ch'in Kao, riding a fish, floated on river and sea and would not fail to investigate what water produced. [Chu] Chung studied [the art of] the genii (*hsien*) with [Ch'in] Kao and acquired his method (*fa*); moreover he offered pearls to the Emperor Wu, and went no one knows where. When 嚴助 Yen Chu was prefect (*t'ai-shou*) of Kuei-chi (in Chê-chiang) [Chu] Chung came forth again, presented [Yen] Chu with a *pei* one foot in diameter, and also gave him a text which said. . .» Then follows the text itself. Ch'in Kao of Kuei-chi is a legendary figure of the time of the Fighting Kingdoms (cf. *T'u-shu chi-ch'êng, shên-i-tien*, 225, 11-12). Chu Chung is absurdly made to have lived both in the time of the Fighting Kingdoms, since he studied with Ch'in Kao, and under the Han, since he offered pearls to the Emperor Wu. The only notice of him occurs in the old *Lieh-hsien chuan* (cf. *T'u-shu chi-ch'êng, shên-i-tien*, 227, 6), where mention is made of enormous pearls offered by him to the Emperor Kao and the Emperor Ching, but nothing is said either of the Emperor Wu or of Yen Chu. Yen Chu alone is a real historical figure; he died c. 122 B. C. But the *Hsiang pei ching* is no doubt a forgery of post-Han times. It makes Wên-wang (11th century B. C.) receive a *pei*, four feet in diameter, from Ta-Ch'in; but Ta-Ch'in, a designation of the Mediterranean Orient, does not appear in Chinese texts before the Christian era. Even admitting, which may be already too much, that the present *Hsiang pei ching* is the same which existed in the first half of the 6th century, it cannot be older than the 4th or 5th century. Its indications, interesting though they may be from the point of view of folklore, can have no direct bearing on the ancient history of the *pei* in China. One point only may be noticed ; the choice, in the apocryphal account of the origin of the treatise, of a man who held office in Chê-chiang may have been inspired by the prevalence at the mouth of the Yang-tzŭ of the «great *pei*» already mentioned in the *Shang-shu ta-chuan*.

Chinese classics do not throw much light on the problem of the cowry. The «Tribute of Yü» in the *Shu ching* is surely not as old as the fourteenth century B. C., as maintained by TERRIEN DE LACOUPERIE, and cannot in fact be dated before the first centuries of the first millennium before Christ. Moreover the «Tribute of Yü», describing the offerings of the «island barbarians» (*tao-i*) at the mouth of the Yang-tzŭ (the people who wore «grass clothes»; see COTTON, p. 487), merely says 厥篚織貝, which LEGGE translated (*Chinese Classics*, III, 111) : «The baskets were filled with woven ornamental silks». In the Index, however, LEGGE remarks (p. 719) : «I should almost be inclined to interpret the character of cowries». Personally, I believe that *chih pei* does not mean «woven ornamental silks», nor even «silk with woven cowry designs», but «woven fabrics ornamented with shells», *i. e.* which had real shells or parts of shells sewn on to the textile. But these shells need not necessarily have been cowries, nor have they anything to do with shell currency. The same may be said of two passages in the