

as ornaments for mirrors, and painters as polishers». The second part of the last sentence may be due to a confusion with the *tzū-pei*. As to the first part, it has a counterpart in another work of Sung times, the 爾雅翼 *Erh-ya i*, which says of cowries (cf. *T'u-shu chi-ch'êng, ch'in-ch'ung-tien*, 156, 5 a) : « At present they are only used by barbers, as an ornament for mirror-belts (鏡帶 *ching-tai*) ». I suppose the custom of the barbers was to hang a mirror at the waist.

But these same cowries, for which China had so little use under the Sung, turn up again in Chinese texts during the Mongol period, as the common currency of Yün-nan; Chinese statements are here in full agreement with those of Polo. Curiously enough, the 蠻書 *Man shu*, written in 864, which provides so much valuable information on the customs of the aborigines of Yün-nan, is silent about shell currency. It merely speaks of the necklaces of conch-shells (珂貝 *k'o-pei*), cowries (巴齒 *pa-ch'ih*; it is certainly *pa-ch'ih* which has been altered to 己齒 *chi-ch'ih* in our editions of Hui-lin, ch. 29 [爲, VIII, 180 a, and *Bongo jiten*, 114]; on *pa-ch'ih*, cf. *infra*), and pearls (*chên-chu*) worn by the women of a tribe north-east of Yung-ch'ang (*Chien-hsi-ts'un-shê* ed., 20 a). Further on (38 a), when describing the customs of the Nan-chao kingdom which then ruled over the whole of Yün-nan, it says : « The country does not use any coins. Whenever they barter for silk fabrics (*tsêng-po*), felt, woollens, gold, silver, turquoise (*sê-sê*), oxen, or sheep, they value them in strips (罽 *mi*) of silk, and say 'Such a thing is worth so many strips' ». The natural conclusion would be that in the ninth century there was still no shell currency in Yün-nan. Yet this conclusion is contradicted by a quotation in the section on *pei-tzū* in the *Pên-ts'ao kang-mu* (46, 22 a) : « [李] 珣 [Li] Hsün says : 'In Yün-nan, [cowries] are very extensively used as money (*ch'ien-huo*) in trade exchange (*chiao-i*)' ». Li Hsün was the author of a *Materia medica of sea drugs* (海藥本草 *Hai-yao pên-ts'ao*), written in the second half of the eighth century (cf. BRETSCHNEIDER, *Botanicon Sinicum*, I, 45). This book is not attributed to Li Hsün, a Persian in *Wên hsûeh chia ta tz'ü tien* No. 1733, or in *Fên ming ta tz'ü tien*, p. 414. Not being able to trace the quotation further back than the *Pên-ts'ao kang-mu* of 1578, first published in 1596, I must leave in abeyance the question of its authorship and authenticity. There are many misquotations in the *Pên-ts'ao kang-mu*.

Moreover no mention of a shell currency in Yün-nan is made in Chou Ch'ü-fei's *Ling-wai tai-ta*, written in 1178, in his paragraph entitled *ta-pei*, « great *pei* », (7, 9 b). The text says : « In Hai-nan there is the *ta-pei*; it has a round back with purple spots; its flat face has a deep slit; on both sides of the slit there are fine 'threads' (縷 *lû*) which sink into the slit; this is what the *Pên-ts'ao* calls *tzū-pei* (« purple *pei* »; cf. *supra*, p. 541). There are also small [*pei*], the breadth of a finger in size, with a back slightly bluish. In the Ta-li kingdom there are used for the decoration of armour and helmets. Moreover, in ancient times, cowries (*pei-tzū*) were used as currency (*t'ung-huo*); precious vessels were also made of them, and used in temples and at Court; at present, in the south, they are looked upon like oysters and clams; the things which are valued in ancient and in modern times are certainly not the same. » LAUFER, who used the present text in his *Chinese clay figures*, 193, partly misunderstood the description of the *tzū-pei* (which is certainly a *Cypræa*, though not the cowry). Moreover, he believed that it was the *tzū-pei* which was used for the decoration of armour in Ta-li, while in the text it is the small