

into WANG Ch'i's *Hsü Wên-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, 4, 43 b) that on October 15, 1282, the following decision had been reached: «It was decided that the taxes (*shui-fu*) levied in Yün-nan should be on a gold (*chin*) basis, but payable in cowries (*pei-tzū*), one 錢 *ch'ien* of gold being valued at 20 索 *so* of cowries.» The *ch'ien*, one tenth of a Chinese ounce, is the *mace* of early European trade in China. This is the only text of Mongol times which mentions the *so* as the unit for counting cowries, and it does not tell us how many cowries made a *so*; but from later texts it will be seen that 80 cowries formed a *so*. It is thus clear that, when Polo says (cf. Vol. I, 277) that, in Yün-nan, «eighty cowries are worth one *saggio* of silver», he is alluding to the *so*.

The use of cowries in Yün-nan continued during the Ming dynasty; unfortunately, the most detailed information on this point is said to occur in 謝肇淛 HsIEH Chao-chih's 滇略 *Tien lio*, a work written c. 1600 (cf. *Ssü-k'u* . . . , 68, 39-40; HsIEH Chao-chih was a doctor of 1592), no copy of which is available in Paris. In 1385 it was decreed that the «autumn taxes» of Yün-nan might be paid «in gold, silver, cowries (*pei*), cloth, lacquer, cinnabar, and quicksilver» (*Ming shih*, 78, 1 b). In the sixth moon of the ninth year of Yung-lo (June 21-July 20, 1411) «the head official (*ch'ang-kuan-ssü*) of the local district (*tien*) of 溪處 Ch'i-ch'u in Yün-nan (south-west of Lin-an), who paid annually [to the treasury] in cowries (海肥 *hai-pa*), asked for a change of the assessment into silver and paper-money (*yin-ch'ao*); this was sanctioned» (WANG Ch'i, *Hsü Wên-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, quoted by FUJITA, 33 a; I have mislaid the reference to the original text). More details, but without the indication of the month, are given in *Ming shih*, 313, 4 a: «The ninth year of Yung-lo (1411), the head official (*ch'ang-kuan*) of the local district of Ch'i-ch'u, 自恩 Tzū-ên, came to the Court and offered a tribute of horses and of vessels of gold and silver; he was rewarded in accordance with the statutes. Tzū-ên then said that his office paid 79,800 *so* of cowries (*hai-pa*) annually, that these were not a product of the country, and asked to be permitted [to pay instead] with paper money and silver (*ch'ao-yin*), which would be more convenient. The Board of Revenue objected that the amount [of the tribute] had been fixed in Hung-wu (1368-1398) and that it was difficult to change the assessment. [But] the Emperor said: 'To [wish to] take what one has not is in truth to oppress the people; these are far away barbarians, and should be shown so much the more compassion.' The request was granted.» This text provides a good illustration of the number of cowries which were imported into Yün-nan, since a single local district had to pay annually to the Imperial Treasury 79,800 *so*, i. e. 6,384,000 cowries.

The officials who, in 1411, had opposed the Emperor's benevolent dispositions must have had their own way in the end, since it was not until 1555 that the Yün-nan authorities were permitted to cast copper cash, and this permission was rescinded in 1565. In 1576, «the Governor [of Yün-nan] 郭延梧 KUO Yen-wu said that Tien (= Yün-nan) produced copper which was left without melting, while on the other hand cowries (*hai-pei*) were bought at a high price, [and that such a proceeding] was not advantageous; as a result, a Mint [for cash] was opened» (滇繫 *Tien hsi*, written in 1807, 4, 16-17; cf. also 袁嘉穀 YÜAN Chia-ku's 滇繹 *Tien i*, published in 1923, 3, 10). Again the Mint was closed in 1580, and «the copper cash in store in the [Yün-nan] treasury were used for the expenses of the troops in Kuei-chou». The Yün-nan Mint was not formally reopened until 1660 (*Tien hsi*, *ibid.*).

Even during the existence of the Mint of 1576-1580, Yün-nan had continued to pay