

Reisen in Siam im Jahre 1863, III, 44, 213). Before disappearing, the cowry currency may have undergone a last development in the Shan states and perhaps in Siam. CORDIER (Y, II, 74) had quoted PARKER as saying in the *China Review*, XXIV (not XXVI), 106, that he had still seen «porcelain money» in the Shan states. To this Parker replied in 1904: «The porcelain coins which. . . . I myself saw current in the Shan states or Siam about ten years ago were of white China, with a blue figure, and about the size of a Keating's cough lozenge, but thicker.» So they were not real cowries, but imitations in porcelain, like the ancient Chinese imitations in musselshell, bone, stone, or metal. I am not certain, however, that they were really used as currency in «the Shan states or Siam», and not meant for instance for gambling, as is still the case with true cowries in India (cf. JACKSON, 170-171), in Nepal (cf. W. Brook NORTHEY, *The Land of the Gurkhas*, Cambridge [1938], 107-108), and in Tibet (cf. S. CHANDRA DAS, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, 300). Stewart CULIN, *Chinese games with dice and dominoes* (Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1893), 501, has illustrated the use of cowries as counters in the Siamese backgammon. Moreover, *lén biâ*, «to play cowries», is the usual Siamese term for «to gamble» (cf. PALLEGOIX, *Dictionarium linguae Thai*, 54). Another possible solution would be to see in these porcelain coins the direct descendants of the ceramic coins which, about the end of the seventeenth century, GERVAISE mentions as being used, with the sanction of the king, in distant parts of the country. But, in such a case, it would be a matter of surprise that no traveller should have noticed them in the intervening period.

The Siamese name of the cowry is *biâ* (CUAZ, *Dict.-franç.-siamois*, 151), in Laotian *biâ hói* (GUIGNARD, *Dictionnaire laotien-français*, 181; *hói* means «shell»; CUAZ, *Lexique français-laotien*, s. v. «cauris», gives «*ngôn biâ*» and «*ngôn hoi*», rather surprising since *ngôn* means «silver»). This is certainly the word which the Chinese-Papai Vocabulary of the Ming dynasty (87 b) transcribes *pieh* = *bie*, *biä*, and perhaps the same as that which the Chinese-Pai-i Vocabulary (27 b) transcribes *mi*. It is not peculiar to the Thai languages. In Khmer, «shell» is *bié* (TANDART, *Dict. français-cambodgien*, I, 418), clearly the same as Siamese *biâ*. But there is also a Khmer form *bier*, «cowry», with which corresponds Cham *biör* (cf. CABATON, *Dict. cham-français*, 358). I shall presently revert to these forms with a final -r.

The interesting point is that the Thai forms of the word for «cowry», such as Siamese *biâ*, Laotian *biâ hói*, etc., cannot be separated from Malay *biya*, «shell» in general, and especially «cowry» (many details of the various species of *biya* are given by RUMPH [«RUMPHIUS»] in his *D'Amboinsche Rariteit-kamer*, 1705, ed. 1741). Spelt in Arabic with the same letters, there is another Malay word pronounced *bēya*, which means «tax», «duties», and, in agreement with FAVRE's surmise (*Dict. mal.-franç.*, II, 185-186), it is probably a doublet of the former word, recalling a time when taxes were paid in cowries. I am not in a position to decide whether the Thai borrowed the word from the Malays, or the reverse; in principle, the first hypothesis seems more probable. As to the phonetic resemblance between *biâ*, *biya* (*bēya*) and the Ch. *pei* (**puâi*), I hold it to be merely accidental. But I would pass no judgment on another possible connection. We have seen that there are forms ending with -r (Khmer *bier*, Cham *biör*); SCHILDER, p. 324, quotes from QUOY and GAIMARD, *Voyage de l'Astrolabe*, Zool. III (Paris, 1834), a form *puré*, «cowry», in the Tonga islands. I am in some doubt as to the true value of this