

In the first half of the fifteenth century, the *Ying-yai shêng-lan* says of Bengal (TP, 1915, 437; 1933, 423-424) : « In trade they use a silver coin called *tang-ch'ieh* (*taṅga*), weighing three mace, an inch and two tenths in diameter and with writing on either side (?) ... For small dealings in the market they use cowries (*hai-pa*), the foreign name of which is *k'ao-li* (« cowry ») ... » In 1564, the *Huang-Ming ssü-i k'ao* (2,73) merely says that the people of Bengal « in trade use silver coins and cowries (*hai pa*) », and likewise the *Huang-Ming hsiang-hsü lu*, 7, 31 b.

Such are the Chinese texts on cowry currency in Bengal; but the *Tao-i chih-liao* mentions its use also in Wu-tieh (Orissa), with additional detail (cf. TP, 1915, 445 [not always correct]; FUJITA, 114 a) : « Each of their silver coins weighs two mace eight candareens, and is equivalent to ten taels of *chung-t'ung* paper money (cf. *supra*, p. 553); it exchanges for 11, 520 odd cowries (*pa-tzū*), which are used instead of cash; 250 cowries buy one « pointed (?) basket » (尖羅 *chien-lo*) of cooked rice, which, in our official peck (*tou*), is of one peck six pints (*shêng*). Every coin can [thus] purchase 46 baskets (*lo*) of rice, which make a total of 73 pecks and two pints (read « six pints »), enough to feed two men for a year, with something to spare. » Orissa is one of the regions of India where it is possible to follow the exchange value of the cowry through a fairly long period. « In 1740, a rupee exchanged for 2,400 cowries; in 1756, for 2,560 cowries; in 1833, 6,400 cowries; and in 1845, 6,500 cowries » (JACKSON, 166-167). So the depreciation of cowries in Orissa was parallel and contemporary with that which we have noticed in Siam.

The main centre of production of the cowries was the Maldives. In its description of these islands, the *Ying-yai shêng-lan* says (cf. TP, 1915, 389; 1933, 417) : « As to the cowries (*hai-pa*), these people collect them and heap them in mounds; they let them rot, and then sell [the shells] to Siam and Bengal, where they are used as cash. » Then follows the description of the other standard product of the Maldives, the dried bonito or « cobily mash ». The two have sometimes been unduly confused. When Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah speaks of the « fish » which is found in the Maldives, FERRAND (*Fe*, 438), following DULAURIER, interprets this « fish » as *Cypræa moneta*; but it must be the bonito. More than two centuries after the *Ying-yai shêng-lan*, but almost in the same terms, RUMPHIUS states that the cowries were carried in full shiploads « from the Maldives to Bengal and Siam » (*D'Amboinsche Rariteit-kamer*, Amsterdam, [1705], folio, 1741 ed., 117).

Fra Mauro has a notice on the Maldives, which escaped both YULE (in *Hobson-Jobson*<sup>2</sup>, 546-548) and A. GRAY (in his survey of ancient notices of the Maldives at the end of his edition of *Pyrard of Laval*). It begins : « Divamoal (not « Diviamoal » as in ZURLA, 51), which is the head of 12,000 islands, as appears from the evidence of those who navigate that sea; in them cowries (*porcelete*) are produced in plenty, and they are used as currency ... » Fra Mauro's « Divamoal » is the exact counterparts of « *Ḍibat-al-maḥal* » in Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah and « *Dīwah-maḥal* » in 'Abdu-'r-Razzāq. *Dīva-* goes back to Skr. *dvīpa*, Pali *dīpa*; the meaning of *maḥal* or *mal-* is still a matter of controversy. I do not know the source of Fra Mauro's notice. Numbers approaching 12,000 occur in various mediaeval writers, but are referred to islands in the Indian Ocean in general, and not to the Maldives only : « 12,700 », inhabited and uninhabited, according to Polo (cf. Vol. I, 434; Y, II, 424, 425); « more than 12,000 » (Monte-Corvino; cf. *Wy*, I, 344); « more than