

of Marco BARBARO's Venetian Genealogies which deal with the Ponti (Treviso Ms., 679 v^o.-680 v^o.), we are at least in a position to say that the Ponti were a noble Venetian family a member of which may very well have been appointed as podestà in Constantinople c. 1260. The Ponti, originally a family of Romagna, moved to Ferrara, and afterwards to Venice where they were already established as wheat merchants in 863; on account of their long residence in Venice and of their good reputation, they entered the Councils of the Republic. Well-known in the 12th cent., the Ponti went to Germany; from 1217 onwards, there was for a time no representative of the family in Venice. But some Ponti must have returned fairly soon, since a « Simeon de Ponte » is mentioned in 1261 and 1266, and a « Joannes de Ponte » many times from 1277 to 1301. The Ponti were still well-known when BARBARO wrote his Genealogies in the middle of the 16th cent.

317. PORCELAIN

« Porcelain », in old French « porcelaine » or « pourcelaine », occurs in mediaeval texts with four different meanings: 1. « cowry »; 2. « china-ware »; 3. « vases of mother of pearl » (?); 4. « purslane ». Nos. 1 and 2 are met with in Polo (see « Cowry » for the readings); No. 4 may be provisionally left out. Scholars are agreed that Nos. 2 and 3 are derived from No. 1. So « porcelain » originally meant « cowry », or rather the genus *Cypraea*, and is certainly borrowed from Italian *porcellana*; « porcelaine » has remained the designation of *Cypraea* at many points on the French coast. Another word is *porcelletta*, used by Ca' da Mosto and others in the sense of « cowry » (see « Cowry »); Jourdain Cathala speaks of *vasa pulcherrima... et porseleta* (CORDIER, *Les Merveilles de l'Asie*, 92, 121, pl. xv); although the construction is abnormal and the text perhaps slightly corrupt, it will be shown further that the stuff meant is certainly « porcelain ». *Porcellane* has become *persivolas* in FRAMPTON (PENZER, 352). Port. *porcelana* has been altered into *persulana* in the Goa dialect, with the meaning « tile », which is also that of Konkani *phuslân*; *pusalana* is « bowl », « cup », in Singhalese (cf. DALGADO, *Influência do Vocabulário Português*, 130). Opinion is also unanimous that both *porcellana* and *porcelletta* represent derivative forms which ultimately are to be traced to Latin *porcus*, « pig ». But unanimity stops at that; no conclusive argument has been produced to establish when, how and why derivative forms of *porcus* had become the Italian designation of the cowry.

MAHN (*Etymol. Untersuchungen*, 1st part, Berlin, 1863, 11-15) devoted to the etymology of « porcelain » a special note in which, following moreover the lead of authors of the 17th and 18th cents., those of the *Encyclopédie* included, he tried to establish that the *Cypraea* had been so called on account of the similitude of its flat bottom with the female sex organ. In Greek, the *Cypraea* was called *χοιρίνη* (not expressed: *κόγχη*), « pig[-shell] », from *χοῖρος*, « pig », itself often used in the obscene sense which also attached to Latin *porcus* and perhaps some of its derivative forms (cf. O. KELLER, *Die antike Tierwelt*, II, 543). Some other names point in the same direction: Dutch *Klipkousen* according to RUMPHIUS (*D'Amboinsche Rariteitkamer*, Amsterdam, 1705; 1741 reprint, 113); old Danish *kudefisk*, « mussel », lit. vulva-fish (cf. KARLGREN, in *Bull. of the*