

a certain ornament on the horse caparison, which gives the rider a title to be furnished with horses and provisions on a journey.

Where I have used the Venetian term *saggio*, the French texts have here and elsewhere *saics* and *saies*, and sometimes *pois*. *Saic* points to *saiga*, which, according to Dupré de St. Maur, is in the Salic laws the equivalent of a denier or the twelfth part of a sol. *Saggio* is possibly the same word, or rather may have been confounded with it, but the *saggio* was a recognised Venetian weight equal to $\frac{1}{8}$ of an ounce. We shall see hereafter that Polo appears to use it to indicate the *miskál*, a weight which may be taken at 74 grains Troy. On that supposition the smallest tablet specified in the text would weigh 18½ ozs. Troy.

I do not know if any gold Paizah has been discovered, but several of silver have been found in the Russian dominions; one near the Dnieper, and two in Eastern Siberia. The first of our plates represents one of these, which was found in the Minusinsk circle of the Government of Yenisei in 1846, and is now in the Asiatic Museum of the Academy of St. Petersburg. For the sake of better illustration of our text, I have taken the liberty to represent the tablet as of gold, instead of silver with only the inscription gilt. The moulded ring inserted in the orifice, to suspend the plate by, is of iron. On the reverse side the ring bears some Chinese characters engraved, which are interpreted as meaning "Publication No. 42." The inscription on the plate itself is in the Mongol language and Baspa character (*supra*, Prologue, note 1, ch. xv.), and its purport is a remarkable testimony to the exactness of Marco's account, and almost a proof of his knowledge of the language and character in which the inscriptions were engraved. It runs, according to Schmidt's version: "*By the strength of the eternal heaven! May the name of the Khagan be holy! Who pays him not reverence is to be slain, and must die!*" The inscriptions on the other plates discovered were essentially similar in meaning. Our second plate shows one of them with the inscription in the Uighúr character.

The superficial dimensions of the Yenisei tablet, as taken from Schmidt's full-size drawing, are 12.2 in. by 3.65 in. The weight is not given.

In the French texts nothing is said of the size of the tablets. But Ramusio's copy in the Prologue, where the tables given by Kiacatu are mentioned (*supra*, p. 35), says that they were a cubit in length and 5 fingers in breadth, and weighed 3 to 4 marks each, *i.e.* 24 to 32 ounces.

(Dupré de St. Maur, *Essai sur les Monnoies*, etc., 1746, p. viii.; also (on *saiga*) see Pertz, *Script.* XVII. 357; *Rubruq.* 312; *Golden Horde*, 219-220, 521; *Ilch.* II. 166 *seqq.*, 355-356; D'Ohsson, III. 412-413; *Q. R.* 177-180; *Ham. Wassáf*, 154, 176; *Makrizi*, IV. 158; *St. Martin, Mém. sur l'Arménie*, II. 137, 169; *M. Mas Latrie in Bibl. de l'Éc. des Chartes*, IV. 585 *seqq.*; *J. As. sér. V.* tom. xvii. 536 *seqq.*; Schmidt, *über eine Mongol. Quadratschrift*, etc., Acad. St. P., 1847; Russian paper by Grigorieff on same subject, 1846.)

["The History tells us (*Liao Shih*, Bk. LVII. f. 2) that the official silver tablets *p'ai tzü* of the period were 600 in number, about a foot in length, and that they were engraved with an inscription like the above ['Our imperial order for post horses. Urgent.'] in national characters (*kuo tzü*), and that when there was important state business the Emperor personally handed the tablet to the envoy, which entitled him to demand horses at the post stations, and to be treated as if he were the Emperor himself travelling. When the tablet was marked 'Urgent,' he had the right to take private horses, and was required to ride, night and day, 700 *li* in twenty-four hours. On his return he had to give back the tablet to the Emperor, who handed it to the prince who had the custody of the state tablets and seals." (*Dr. S. W. Bushell, Actes XI. Cong. Int. Orient.*, Paris, p. 17.)

"The Kin, in the thirteenth century, used badges of office made of silver. They were rectangular, bore the imperial seal, and an inscription indicative of the duty of the bearer. (*Chavannes, Voyageurs chez les Khitans*, 102.) The Nü-chên at an earlier date used wooden *pai-tzü* tied to each horseman and horse, to distinguish them by. (*Ma Tuan-lin*, Bk. 327, 11.)" (*Rockhill, Rubruck*, p. 181, note.)