

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S SALT MONEY AND GOLD
horse and departs. And then the man and woman mocking him cry after him saying, O thou, where goest thou? Show what thou takest with thee of ours; prove to us, O reprobate one, what thou hast gained. See what thou hast left to us which thou hast forgotten; and shows that piece which they earned with him. We have this of thine, O wretch, and thou takest with thee nothing. And so they deride him; and this manner they observe. And I tell you that they have money in this province in such a way as I shall tell you. For you may know that there is gold in bars, and they weigh it in saggi of gold and it is valued according as it weighs, and this they use for big money, but they have no money with any mark coined with a die. And the small money, I will tell you what it is. They take salt water with which they make salt, and have it boiled in a pan, and then, when it has boiled an hour, it becomes stiff like paste, and they cast it into a mould, & it is made into shapes of the amount of a two dinar loaf, which are flat on the underside and are round above, and it is of the size that it can weigh about a half-pound. And when they are made they are put on stones baked very hot near the fire, and there they dry and are made hard. And on this sort of money they put the seal of the lord; nor can the money of this kind be made by others than the officers of the lord. And some money is current in half a pound, and some in one pound, and some less and some more according to their size and to the weight weighed in saggi. And fourscore¹ of such salts as this which I have described to you is worth one saggio of fine gold, that is one weight, and this is the small money which they spend. But the merchants go with this money to those people who live in the mountains in wild and unfrequented places and obtain a saggio of gold for sixty, fifty, and forty of those coins of salt, according as the people are in a place more wild and removed from cities and civilised people; because they cannot sell their gold and other things, like musk and other things, whenever they wish, because they have no one to whom to sell them, and therefore they sell cheaply; for they find gold in rivers and lakes, as has been said. And these merchants go through mountains and places of Tebet aforesaid, where salt money is used in the same way; and they make vast gain and profit, because those people use of that salt in food, and also buy things which they need. But in the cities they use almost nothing but the broken pieces of the said coins in food, and spend the whole coins. They have a very great number of gudderi, the animals which make musk, living in that country, from which they have very great profit, and the hunters catch them and take the musk from them in great quantity. They have also fish enough and good, and they take them from the lake of which I have told you above where [52d] the pearls are found. And those people live much by hunting. They have in that country lions and lynxes and bears and fallow-deer and stags and roe-deer and hares and other wild animals in plenty, and they have birds of all kinds

¹ VB: lxx