

do I find anything similar to Godinho's text. Godinho very often blunders, but even so he provides bits of interesting information. It is a pity that his editor and translator has left the text without a note. The new translation by J. N. MILLS in *J. Mal. Br. R.A.S.* 1930, part I, throws no light on this particular point; cf. also H. BERNARD, *La découverte de Nestoriens Mongols aux Ordos*, Tientsin, 1935, 8vo, 29-30.

359. THAI

thai R

The paragraph on the twelve « Thai », parallel to the twelve « Scieng », has been simply ignored by YULE and PAUTHIER, in spite of its evident interest. While the twelve « Scieng » refer to the metropolitan and provincial administration dependent on the Chung-shu-shêng or Grand Secretariat, the twelve « Thai » represent the 御史臺 Yü-shih-t'ai and its representatives in the provinces (cf. Perceval YETTS in *RR*, 436-437). I have kept the spelling *thai*, because the word is written thus in RAMUSIO, our only source here, but *tai* would be as much, or even more, in agreement with what we may believe to have been Polo's original form; in any case, the *-h-* is purely orthographical, and has nothing to do with the aspirate in *t'ai*.

We generally translate Yü-shih-t'ai by « Board of Censors », and just as there was a metropolitan Chung-shu-shêng at the capital and « moving » (行 *hsing*) Chung-shu-shêng (or simply *hsing-shêng*) in the provinces, there was a metropolitan Yü-shih-t'ai and several « moving » (*hsing*) Yü-shih-t'ai (or simply *hsing-t'ai*). But Polo is wrong when he says that the twelve « Thai » had supervision over military affairs: that was, in principle at least, the office of the 樞密院 Ch'u-mi-yüan and of its provincial delegates, the « moving » Ch'u-mi-yüan (or simply *hsing-yüan*). But Polo is right in a way when he says that the promotion or the dismissal of officials was incumbent upon the « Thai »; it was the duty of the Yü-shih-t'ai to report on the behaviour of individuals.

If the name of « Thai » seems certain, and must refer to the Yü-shih-t'ai, it is more difficult to account for the number of « twelve » given by Polo. It seems as though there was some confusion in his mind in regard to the numbers of the « Scieng » and the « Thai », and moreover, even in the case of the « Scieng », he seems to have gone somewhat astray. It is a matter of regret that we have here only R, and not Z, as there is some reason to believe that the original text of this chapter may have read rather differently (see « Scieng »). It is not true that the « Thai » ranked above the « Scieng ».

On the Yü-shih-t'ai, cf. *YS*, 86, 12 a-14 b.

By a puzzling coincidence, Rašidu-'d-Dīn says that the commanders of armies are called طایفو *taifu* (cf. *Y*¹, III, 120; *Bl*, II, 470), which is obscure, and one may be tempted to suppose some connection with Polo's « Thai ». YULE thought of the modern 撫台 *fu-t'ai*; but this was the colloquial title of the Ch'ing provincial governors or *hsün-fu*, and must be left out of account.