

SUPPLY OF MEN AND HORSES FOR THE POSTS = MARCO POLO

R one from the other, & some more; and he sends people there who live there and work the land
 and serve those posts; and great villages are formed there. And in this way which you have
 R FB heard the messengers and ambassadors of the great lord go and come in all directions
 R through all the provinces and kingdoms and other parts under his rule, with great convenience
 VA and ease, when they are sent by him, and have lodging and horses ready at every days
 L FB stage & every other necessary as they will, that they may be comfortable wherever they go.
 FB And this is in truth quite the greatest pride and the greatest grandeur that any
 emperor has or might ever have, nor any king nor any other earthly man. For you
 may know quite truly that more than two hundred thousand¹ horses stay at these
 R L L posts throughout his provinces, all set apart specially for his ambassadors & messengers,
 VA that they may be able to change when there is need. And again I tell you that the palaces
 FB are more than ten thousand² which are all so provided with rich furniture as I
 have told you; and it is a thing so wonderful and of so great cost that it could
 R hardly be rightly told or written. And if anyone were to doubt how there are so many
 people to do so many duties, and on what they live, it is answered that all the idolaters and
 Saracens likewise take six, eight, and ten wives each, provided that they can pay the expense,
 and beget infinite sons; and there will be many men of whom each will have more than thirty
 sons, and all follow him armed; and this because of the many wives. But with us one has but
 one wife, and if she is barren the man will end his life with her and beget no son, and therefore
 we have not so many people as they. And with regard to victuals they have plenty of them,
 because they use for the more part rice, panick, and millet; specially Tartars, Cataians, and
 of the province of Mangi. And these three grains yield in their lands a hundredfold for every
 measure. These people do not use bread, but only boil these three kinds of grain with the milk
 or flesh, and eat them. And wheat with them does not give so great increase; but what they reap
 they eat only as macaroni and other viands made of dough. With them no land which can be
 ploughed lies fallow; and their animals increase and multiply without end, and when they go
 to the field there is not one who does not take with him six, eight, and more horses for himself.
 From this it can be clearly understood for what reason there is so great a multitude of people in
 those parts, and that they have the means of living so abundantly. And again I will tell you a
 thing which I had forgotten which relates to our matter which I have now told
 FB you, which does well to tell and to recall. It is true that between the one post and the
 FB second on whatever road it may be they are planned and it is so done that every three miles
 R there is a hamlet which can have about forty houses³ and more and less, according

¹ TA³: iiiij^m P: ultra decem millia VA by some confusion transposes the 10000 & 200000.

² TA³: ij^m

³ TA: xl huomini a piede LT: de quadraginta hominibus uel domibus P: domus pauce