

HOW EXPRESS HORSES ARE PROVIDED & KEPT *≠* MARCO POLO  
 that the great lord has appointed them thus. For he says, Who is near such a post?  
 FB Such a city. And he makes them see how many horses it can give and keep for [46b] the  
 FB messengers, and one tells him a hundred; and they are ordered to put a hundred  
 FB horses at such a post *which is also near to this*. Then he sees all the other towns and  
 FB villages—*such a village, such a large hamlet*—how many horses they can keep, and those  
 FB which they are able to keep, *such and such numbers* they are ordered to keep at the  
 R post. And in such a way are all the horses which are kept at the said posts arranged so  
 VA FA that the great lord spends nothing on them; *but all the posts are supplied by the cities &*  
 R *villages and towns which are around them, excepting only so much that he has the posts*  
 R *of the out of the way places supplied with his own horses in part, and in part the*  
 R *cities, castles, towns near them keep them there. And the cities are at agreement the one with*  
 R *the other, because between one post and the other there is at times a city which with the others*  
 R *places its share there. And these cities maintain the horses with the revenues which ought to go*  
 R *to the great Kaan, ordering such a man, supposing that he ought to pay so much as would keep*  
 R *a horse and a half, to keep it at the post near to him. But you ought to know that the cities do*  
 R *not keep four hundred horses at the posts continually; on the contrary they keep two hundred*  
 R *of them by the month to bear the fatigues, and in this interval other two hundred of them are*  
 R *being fattened; and at the end of the month the fat are put at the post, and the others are fattened*  
 R *in the same way; and they go doing like this continually. But if it happens that in any place*  
 R *there is some river or lake through which it is necessary for the runners and those on horseback*  
 R *to pass, the cities near by keep three and four boats always ready for this purpose. And if it*  
 R *is necessary to cross some desert of many days marches, in which no dwelling can be made, the*  
 R *city which is next to such desert is bound to give the horses to the lord's ambassadors as far as*  
 R *to beyond the desert, and the victuals with the escort. But the lord gives help to that city.*  
 FB FB Moreover I tell you further that at these hamlets of which I have told you there are men  
 FB likewise furnished with great girdles full of little bells, and when there is need that messen-  
 LT gers on horseback go expressly to tell the great lord quickly news from distant places  
 FB LT of any land, of any province or city, which may be in rebellion against him, or of any  
 VA baron, or of the things which may be needed by the lord, they ride quite a hundred  
 FB and two hundred miles in one day, or indeed two hundred and fifty, and also at  
 LT night, and I will show you reason how. For when the messengers wish to go so  
 FB FB expressly and so many miles in a day as I have told you, he has the gersfalcon tablet  
 FB FB with him always as a sign that he wishes to go at express speed, so that, if at any time  
 FB FB it happened that as it galloped on the road the horse broke down or had any delay, and he found  
 FB FB whoever it might be on the road, he could unhorse him and take his animal, for none would  
 FB FB dare to refuse it. So that they never have any but good animals and fresh for their needs. They  
 LT R take horses from the post, where they are ready for them. And if they are two and they start