

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s SLEDGES DRAWN BY DOGS

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at end of each journey of those thirteen journeys to which that province extends is a hamlet, TA LT
in which hamlet are several houses of timber raised above the ground in which can comfortably R
live the men who bring and receive merchandise and the merchants who go to that province for LT
the sake of profit, and in each of those hamlets is a house which they call a post where all L V
the messengers of the lord who go through the country lodge, and these messengers go VB VB
in this way. At each of these posts are keepers with quite forty¹ very large sort of animals L R
like dogs, which can almost be called dogs, little smaller than an ass,² and these dogs
are all accustomed and taught to draw just as oxen do in our country, & they draw sledges, LT VA
which are called *sliozola*, which in the Italian tongue are named *tragie* or *tregule*, to carry the VL LT
messengers from the one post to the other, that is from one journey to the next,
when there is need, and I will tell you how. Now you may know that because in all L
those days journeys horses cannot go for the ice and for the mud; for these [105b]
thirteen journeys are between two very great mountains in a great valley, and so the L
ice there and the mud is such as I have told you. Now for this reason just as I
have told you horses cannot go.³ And because a cart with wheels could not go
there because they would all stick in the mud and slip too much on the ice, they have had a TA
sledge made. A sledge or *tragia* is a certain vehicle which has no wheels, but they are⁴ LT
made of very light wood and flat and smoothed underneath, & they are raised at the ends in LT R
the way of a semicircle, in such a way that they go up over the ice and over the mud
and over the mire, and because also the dogs are strong and used to such work as this, nor LT
are great loads or very heavy put on the sledges, those said dogs draw those sledges easily enough
through the said mud so that they are not stuck in it too much at all as they are drawn. LT
And for these sledges, there are many of them in our lands which some among us use, LT
& specially those who live in the mountains and many others also who live in the country,
for they are those on which one carries up the hay and the straw in the winter
when there is great rain and great mud. And on this sledge a bear skin is put up
there, and then, when the lord wishes to send a messenger of his, he mounts up there. VB VB
And those who conduct those sledges harness six dogs⁵ of those large ones of which I LT
have told you above, with yokes, two & two in proper order, to take these sledges. And Z G R LT
these dogs, no one leads them but they go quite straight to the next post and
draw the sledge very well both through the ice and through[the]mire. And so
they go from one post to the other. And yet it is true that he who guards the

¹ P: "sixty" ² VB: *delà grandeza deli gran asseni*

³ G adds "But where there are flowing waters, of which there is much, there are bridges over."

⁴ *ne sunt* for *me sunt* or, perhaps, for *e sunt*

⁵ *cheualz* for *chiens* VB: "15 great dogs" V: "all 4 or 5 . ." VL: "4 or 6"