

Source: Marco Polo

Our Central Question

*Which sources are
most reliable for
learning about
the ancient Silk Road?*

What do you remember about using the **Bookmark Reading Guide**?

First: the **Headnote** and **Attribution**

As you read:



circle in pencil

- Who said, drew, or wrote this?
- When and where was it said, drawn, or written?
- What type of source is this?
- Why was it said, drawn, or written? Or, for whom was it created?

After you read:



Discuss with your group.



Make a note.

- Which of these details matter and why?

Second: the **Source**

As you read:



Use one question;
underline in pencil

- What people and institutions are actors in the source? What is the relationship between those people and institutions?
- What parts of the source tell you what the author or people in the text think, want, or experience?
- Find sentences that begin with transition words or introductory phrases. What key ideas come after transition words or introductory phrases?
- What parts of the source seem most important for understanding it? Why?

After you read:



Discuss with your group.



Make a note.


- What do the underlined parts help us understand about the source?


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DON'T FORGET THE BACK OF THE BOOKMARK...

- (1) *How trustworthy is the author/artist given the central question we are trying to answer?*
- (2) *What was going on in the context that the source came from that might affect its usefulness given the central question we are trying to answer?*
- (3) *How do we weigh this source in comparison with others?*

 Discuss with your group.

 Box important parts for answering the Central Question

 Write down your group's thoughts.

- What questions do you have about this source?
- How reliable is this source for the central question we are trying to answer? See 'Reasoning about the Evidence' below.
- What does this source help us understand about the Central Question?

Reasoning about the Evidence

- 1. How trustworthy is the author/artist given the central question we are trying to answer?**
 - Was the person who created this in a position to know about the issues?
 - Was the person who created this an insider or an outsider? (Ex: speaks the same language, knows a lot about topic)
 - What was the point of view of the person who created this?
 - What does the person who created this want the reader to think or feel?
 - Is the source believable?
- 2. What was going on in the context that the source came from that might affect its usefulness given the central question we are trying to answer?**
 - Was this source created in the place where the events happened?
 - Was this source created at the time when the events happened? Does that matter?
 - What else was going on at this time that might have influenced the author/artist?
 - How does this time/place compare to us today? What's the same or different?
 - Whose voices or perspectives are not represented here?
- 3. How do we weigh this source in comparison with others?**
 - Does this source provide the same information as other sources?
 - In what ways does this source agree or disagree with others?
 - How do the ideas of the person who created this source compare to other ideas from the same time period or place?
 - What can this source tell us? What can't we learn from this source?



Marco Polo (Source 2)



Headnote: In 1271, Marco Polo left Italy to go on a trading journey with his father and uncle. After returning home, Marco Polo was captured in a war and put in prison. While in prison, he dictated the stories of his travels to his cellmate, Rustichello, who wrote them down. They were published in the book "Travels of Marco Polo." All historians agree that Marco Polo traveled with his father and uncle in the 1270s. However, historians debate whether Polo actually went to all the places that he wrote about.

Beijing is built in the form of a square, with a total circumference of 24 miles. The city is full of fine mansions, inns, and houses. You may take it for a fact that more precious goods are imported into Beijing than into any other city in the world. Let me give you specifics. All the treasures that come from India – precious stones, pearls, and other gems – are brought here. This is because of the Great Khan himself, who lives here. It is a fact that every day more than 1,000 cartloads of silk enter the city; for much cloth of gold and silk is woven here. In the center of the city stands a huge palace with a great bell. In the evening the bell chimes three times as a signal that no one may go about the town. Once the bell has sounded, no one goes anywhere in the city except in the case of childbirth or illness.

At feasts, a great lion is brought before the Great Khan. As soon as it sees him, it flings itself down before him with humility and seems to acknowledge him as lord. There it stays without a chain, and is indeed a thing to marvel at.

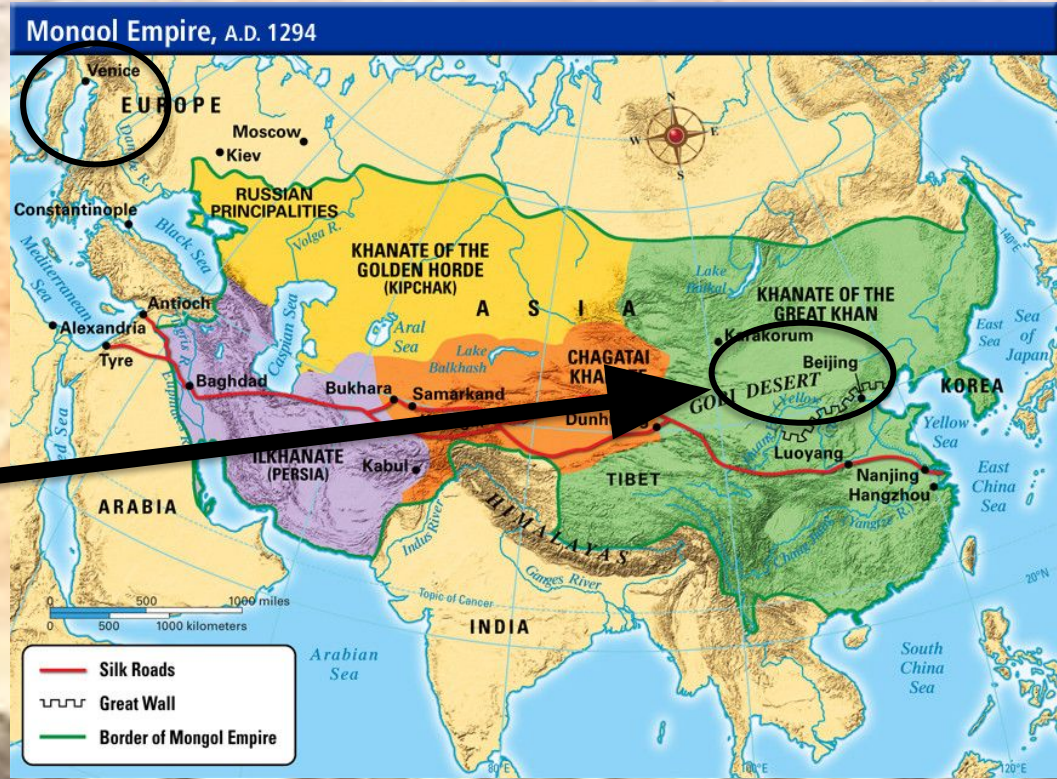
Attribution: Modified from *Travels of Marco Polo*, written in Italy around 1300. Found in [The Silk Road: A New History with Documents](#), written by Professor Valerie Hansen and published in 2017. (pp. 411, 430-432).

The Silk Road during the Mongol Empire in the 1300s

Where Marco Polo is from



Marco Polo says he visited Beijing. The Great Khan (Kublai Khan) was the leader of this kingdom.



Attribution: Accessed at:

<http://history.stackexchange.com/questions/15271/what-prevented-the-mongolian-empire-from-expanding-into-europe>



Focus on what the author thought, wanted or experienced.

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AFTER YOU READ...

(1) How reliable is this source for teaching others about the ancient Silk Road?

Reliable –

Unreliable –

(2) What does Marco Polo help you understand about the Silk Road?

(3) Box the parts of the source that help you think about the central