



# THE MONGOL EMPIRE AS A EURASIAN NETWORK

AP World History Notes  
Chapter 12

# Toward a World Economy



*Khubilai Khan Greeting the Polo Brothers (detail)*  
Livre des merveilles, Bibliothèque nationale  
de France, Paris

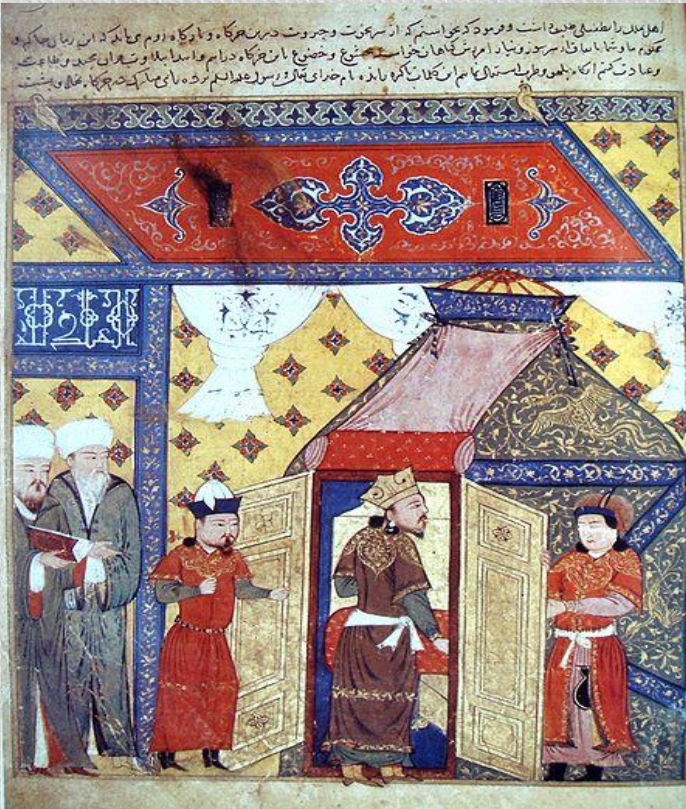
- Mongols did not make or trade anything themselves
- But they did promote international commerce by maintaining secure trade networks
  - Done so that they could tax goods and extract wealth from larger civilizations
- Result = brought the two ends of the Eurasian world (Europe and China) into closer contact than ever before
- Result = start of a truly international economy

# Diplomacy on a Eurasian Scale

- In addition to facilitating long-distance trade, the Mongols also prompted diplomatic relationships throughout Eurasia
- Closest relationship = between the courts of China and Persia
  - Regularly exchanged ambassadors
  - Shared intelligence information
  - Fostered trade between their regions
  - Sent skilled workers back and forth



# Cultural Exchange in the Mongol Realm



Persian depiction of Ghazan's conversion to Islam

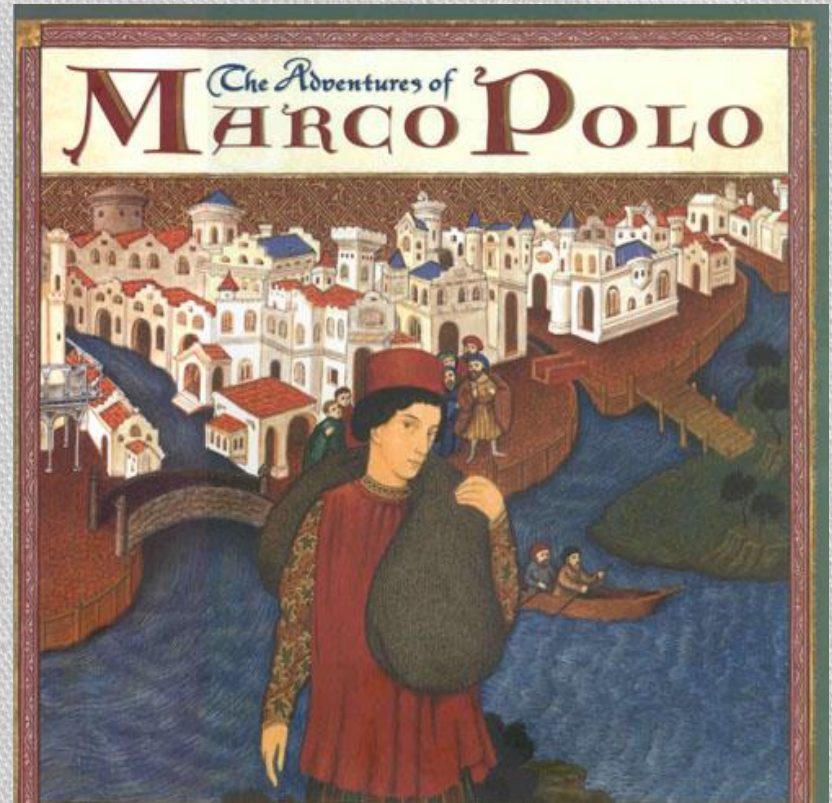
- Substantial exchange of peoples and cultures
- Missionaries and traders traveled throughout the empire
- Mongols forcibly transferred skilled craftsmen and educated people to distant parts of the empire
- Policy of religious tolerance spread religions
- Result = exchange of ideas and techniques

# Cultural Exchange in the Mongol Realm

Region	Major Contributions
China	Daoism, acupuncture, painting, printing, gunpowder weapons, compass navigation, medical techniques
Persia / the Middle East	Islam, astronomy, lemons, carrots
Byzantium	Christianity

# Cultural Exchange in the Mongol Realm

- Europeans benefited the most from this exchange
  - Had been more cut off from the rest of the world
  - Had been less technologically developed
  - Were able to benefit without the devastating consequences of Mongol conquest



# The Plague

- Originated in Central Asia
- Spread across trade routes of the Mongol Empire
- Carried by rodents and transmitted to humans by fleas
- 1331 = erupted in northern China
- 1347 = had reached the Middle East and Western Europe
- 1348 – 1350 = ½ of Europe's population died
- Result = sharp decline in the Eurasian population for over a century



# The Plague





# The Plague: Results



- Primary reason for the demise of the Mongol Empire
- Population contracted
- Cities declined
- Volume of trade diminished all across the world
- By 1350 = Mongol Empire was in disarray
- Within a century → Mongols lost control of the Chinese, Persian, and Russian civilizations

# The Plague: Results

- Europeans turned to the sea in their continuing efforts to reach Asia
- WHY?
  - Disruption of Mongol-based land routes
  - Desire to avoid Muslim intermediaries (and their heavy taxes)

