THE MONGOL EMPIRE AS A EURASIAN NETWORK

AP World History Notes
Chapter 12
Toward a World Economy

- 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

• 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

Persian depiction of Ghazan’s conversion to Islam
## Cultural Exchange in the Mongol Realm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Major Contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Daoism, acupuncture, painting, printing, gunpowder weapons, compass navigation, medical techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persia / the Middle East</td>
<td>Islam, astronomy, lemons, carrots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Byzantium</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
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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)