

Hist 498 A **Marco Polo**
Winter 2008

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Office hours: Thursday 10:00-11:30

This senior seminar will focus on Marco Polo's *Description of the World* as a source for understanding Asia in the late thirteenth century. After reading Marco Polo in translation, we will look at the controversies surrounding the book and the uses scholars have made of it. The first four weeks will be devoted to common readings to give us all a solid foundation in the topic. During the next two weeks, students will begin their research project by reading first another primary source, then another major secondary source, and reporting on both orally in class. The last three weeks will be devoted to discussion of drafts of the research papers.

Readings:

Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*
Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*
Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?*

Other readings are available online.

Grading: 50 % participation, 50% research paper

Participation includes discussion of readings, posting comments and questions about the readings online, oral reports of other readings, and critique of the first draft of three other students' papers. The online postings are on GoPost (<https://catalysttools.washington.edu/gopost/board/ebrey/3610>, or via the class website: <http://faculty.washington.edu/ebrey/MarcoPolo/index.html>)

Research papers should draw on Marco Polo or engage Marco Polo issues in some other way. Below are some possible starting points:

1. Compare two or more early foreign perspectives on the Mongols or the Chinese (or some facet of Mongol or Chinese culture or society).
2. Compare two or more early travel accounts concerning a specific subject (trade, religion, social relations, and so on) in several countries.

3. Analyze evidence concerning Eurasian long-distance trade from one or more early travel accounts.
4. Analyze ways of conceptualizing cultural difference from one or more early travel account
5. Analyze how Christian ideas and practices shaped Marco Polo's understanding of the societies and religions he encountered.
6. Analyze the European reception of Marco Polo's book in a specified period.

Many other topics would also make good research papers. Do not feel limited to these ones, but do check with me if you want to go in a different direction. My one requirement is that students take topics that require them to do original research in primary sources, albeit translated ones, rather than rely primarily on modern studies. Aim for a length of 15 to 20 pages.

Schedule

Week 1 January 10 Introduction: travel literature as an historical source

Week 2 January 17 Marco Polo's book

Read: *The Travels of Marco Polo*

Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*, pp. 1-87

Week 3 January 24 Marco Polo and Asia

Read: Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*, pp. 88-150

PROPOSE BOOKS TO READ FOR WEEKS 6 AND 7

Week 4 January 31 Questioning Marco Polo's Book

Read: Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?*

PROPOSE A PAPER TOPIC, WITH MAIN SOURCES IDENTIFIED

Week 5 February 7 Defending Marco Polo's Book

Read: Rachewiltz, Igor de. "F. Wood's *Did Marco Polo Go to China?*"

<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/eah/Marcopolo.html>

Peter Jackson, "Marco Polo and his 'Travels'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 61.1 (1998), 82-101. Online access via *JSTOR*

Yang, Zhijiu. "Marco Polo Did Come to China: a Reply to Did Marco Polo Go to China?" *Social Sciences in China* (Beijing) 19, no.3 (Fall 1998): 98-123 Online reserve

Week 6 February 14 Oral reports on reading another primary source.

Week 7 February 21 Oral reports on reading another secondary source.

THOSE PRESENTING IN WEEK EIGHT MUST BRING COPIES OF THEIR PAPER DRAFT FOR EACH PERSON IN THE CLASS

Week 8 February 28 discussion of drafts. Each paper will have three assigned discussants.

THOSE PRESENTING IN WEEK NINE MUST BRING COPIES OF THEIR PAPER DRAFT FOR EACH PERSON IN THE CLASS

Week 9 March 6 discussion of drafts. Each paper will have three assigned discussants.

THOSE PRESENTING IN WEEK TEN MUST BRING COPIES OF THEIR PAPER DRAFT FOR EACH PERSON IN THE CLASS

Week 10 March 13 discussion of drafts. Each paper will have three assigned discussants.

Final paper due by 4 PM Monday March 17 in Ebrey's mailbox in the History department office on the third floor of Smith

Bibliography

Primary Sources

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League of America, 1929. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 915 P76LEy1>

Polo, Marco. *The Travels of Marco Polo the Venetian.* (ed. by Thomas Wright) London: G. Bell, 1904. <EAsia General Stacks G370 .P72 1904> the translation of Marsden revised with a selection of his notes

Polo, Marco. *The Travels of Marco Polo; The Venetian.* (ed. with an introduction by Manuel Komroff) New York: Horace Liveright, 1930. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 915 P76LEk> revised from Marsden's translation

2. Other travel accounts

A. By Europeans who reported on Mongolia or China during the Mongol period

1. Giovanni Da Pian Del Carpine, Archbishop Of Antivari D 1252

Dawson, Christopher. *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries.* (tr. by a nun of Stanbrook Abbey) New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955. The most accessible translation of both accounts, that of John of Plano Carpini on pp. 3-72, and the shorter one by Benedict, pp. 79-84. Also in this edition, the letters of the Pope and of the Great Khan. ON RESERVE

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Komroff, Manuel ed. *Contemporaries of Marco Polo, Consisting of the Travel Records to the Eastern Parts of the World of William of Rubruck (1253-1255); the Journey of John of Pian de Carpini (1245-1247); the Journal of Friar Odoric (1318-1330) & the Oriental Travels of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (1160-1173).* New York: Boni & Liveright, 1928 John of Pian de Carpini pp.3-50 ON RESERVE

2. Willem Van Ruysbroeck, Ca 1210 Ca 1270

Dawson 1955 (see above), pp. 87-220

Ruysbroeck, Willem van. *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Mogke, 1253-1255* (tr. by Peter Jackson) London: Hakluyt Society, 1990. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks G161 .H2 ser.2 no.173>

Hakluyt 1967 (see above), pp. 188-234.

Komroff 1928 (see above), pp. 52-209.

3. Sir John Mandeville

Mandeville, John, Sir. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville.* (tr. with an introduction by C.W.R.D. Moseley) New York: Penguin, 1983. <Odegaard

Stacks G370 .M29 1983 >

Mandeville, John, Sir. *Mandeville's Travels*. (ed. by M. C. Seymour) Oxford: Clarendon P., 1967. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks G370 .M29 1967>

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B. Non-European travelers of much the same period

1. Ibn Battuta

Ibn Batuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*. Trans. by H.A.R. Gibb. Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1958-2000 <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks G161 .H2 ser.2 no.110, etc. LIB. HAS v.1-5> tr. with revisions and notes from the Arabic text

Yule, Henry, Sir. ed. *Cathay and the Way Thither, Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*. London: Printed for the Hakluyt society, 1866. < Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 915.1 Yu9c v.2> Vol. IV Ibn Batuta pp. 1-168

2. Rabban Sauma

Budge, Wallis E. A. *The Monks of Kubla Khan*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1928. < Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 281.8 M749> Included among translations of the biographies of monks at the Yuan court

C. Chinese travelers who traveled west in early times, and other accounts of foreign countries

Faxian. *Faxian, a Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*. (tr. and annotated with a Korean recension of the Chinese text, by James Legge) New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965. <EAsia General Stacks DS6 .F33 1965/ Suzzallo/Allen Stacks DS6 .F33 1965, 915 F11cEL1> Translation of Chinese monk Faxian's narrative of his travel to India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in search of the Buddhist books of discipline

Li Chih-Ch'ang. *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-Ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan*. London: Routledge, 1931. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 915.1 L61hE> Recorded by His Disciple Li Chih-Ch'ang. Tr. and Introd. by Arthur Waley, The translation omits the poetry scattered through the text; the introduction focuses mainly on the Taoist context for the work and its author.

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annotation that is often valuable." He also includes translations of Ch'ang-ch'un's correspondence with Chingis Khan and the 1228 introduction to the text. Travelers to West; Ye-Lu Ch'u Ts'ai (1219), Wu-Ku-Sun(1220-1221), Ch'ang Ch'un(1221-1224) Ch'ang Te(1259) Yelu Hi Liang(1260-1263)

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Ma Huan, Ying-yai Sheng-lan: The overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores [1433]. Trans. J.V.G. Mills. Cambridge University Press. 1970. By an interpreter on Zheng He's voyages.

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Ch'oe, Pu. *Ch'oe Pu's diary: A Record of Drifting across the Sea*. (tr. with intro. and notes by John Meskill). Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965 <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks 950.8 As78m no.17>

3. Accounts of the Mongols

A. By Mongols

Kahn, Paul. *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chinghis Khan; An Adaptation of the Yuan Ch'ao Pi Shih*. (tr. by Francis Woodman Cleaves and Paul Kahn). San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984. ON RESERVE

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Yuan chao bi shi. The Secret History of the Mongols: the Life and Times of Chinggis Khan. Richmond: Curzon, 2000. <Suzzallo/Allen Stacks DS19 .Y7813 2001>

Yuan chao bi shi. The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century (tr. with a historical and philological

commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz). Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004.
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Rashid Aldin. *The Successors of Genghis Khan.*(tr. from the Persian by John Andrew Boyle). New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.
<Suzzallo/Allen Stacks D17 .R26933 1971 >

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