

Mankind Textbook- Marco Polo

Directions: Read the section titled “Marco Polo” on pg. 164 and look at the map on pg. 165 of your textbook to answer the following questions. Remember to restate and use complete sentences.

1. According to the reading, what was Marco Polo’s final destination when he set out to travel?

2. According to the reading, what did Marco Polo take with him on his travels back home?

3. According to the reading, how do we know about Marco Polo’s travels today?

4. According to the map, list at least three countries to which Marco Polo traveled?

5. How do you think Marco Polo’s stories may have had an effect on other Europeans?

MARCO POLO

In 1271 CE Italian merchants Niccolò and Maffeo Polo set out on a voyage from Venice to the court of Kublai Khan in China. The Polo brothers had been guests of the Chinese court before and were eager to return. Niccolò's seventeen-year-old son, Marco, traveled with them on the four-year voyage across the Near East and Central Asia.

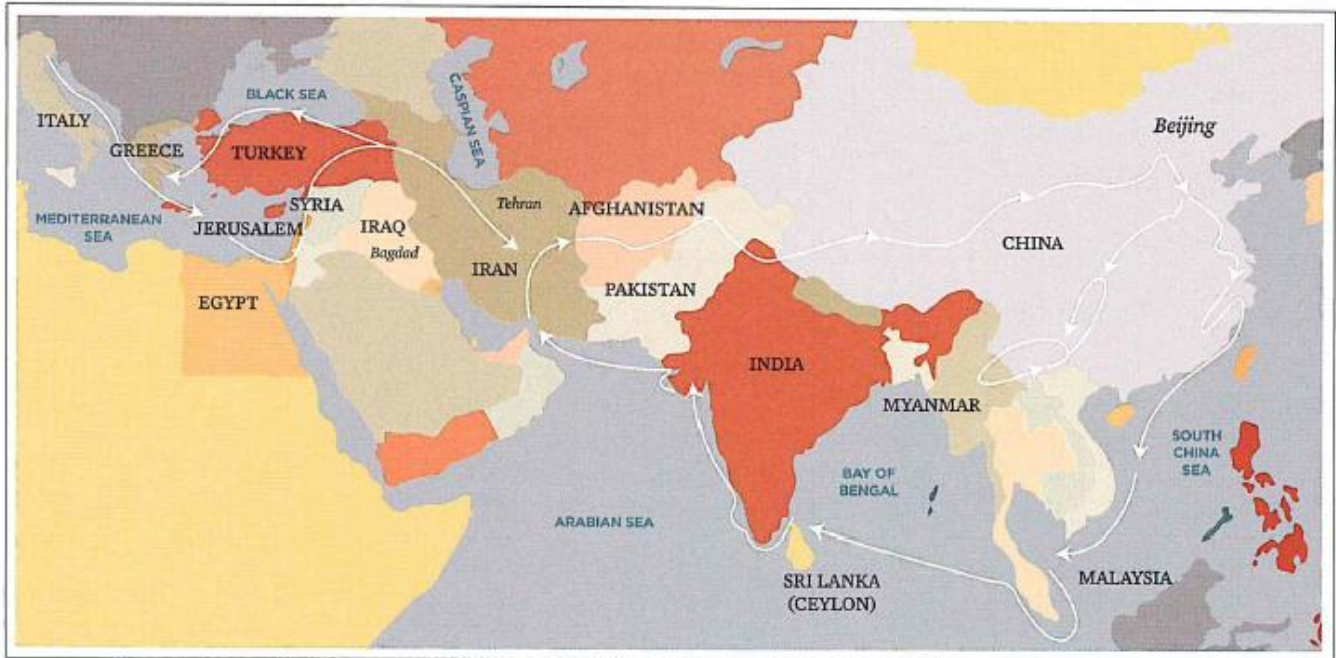
The young Venetian quickly became a favorite of Kublai Khan. During his time at the Mongol court, Marco traveled with diplomatic missions to Persia, India, and Southeast Asia. He served on

the emperor's council. He even held the position of tax collector in the city of Yangzhou for three years. He never learned Chinese, but neither did most of the Mongols in the Great Khan's court. Like them, Marco became fluent in the languages of the Mongolian ruling classes: Persian and Mongolian.

Seventeen years after they arrived, the Polos left China, escorting a Mongolian princess who was to marry the Khan of Persia. They sailed to Persia by way of Sumatra and South India, then traveled overland to Constantinople. They

finally reached Venice in 1295, carrying a fortune in precious stones.

Marco Polo would probably never have written his account of their travels if he hadn't volunteered to command a galley in the ongoing war between Venice and Genoa. Captured during a skirmish, he spent a year in prison at Genoa, where he amused his fellow prisoners with stories of his travels. His audience included a writer of romance tales, who urged Marco to write down the story of his travels. Popularly known at the time as *Marco Polo's travels* was a fourteenth-century best seller.



Marco Polo's Travels