

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

2.1: The Silk Roads

Directions: Read the excerpt below and answer the following prompts in complete sentences.

"I must tell you that the merchants who go from this country of Cathay to the other countries carry with them a great quantity of goods, such as fine spices, pearls, musk, gold, silver, and other precious things; and they bring back in exchange a great quantity of silk, raw and spun, and cloths of silk and gold, and great store of rhubarb, and also many horses. And you must know that the merchants who go to and fro on this journey are very rich men, and have great credit and authority, both with the king and with all the other princes and barons of those regions through which they pass."

Source: Marco Polo. The Travels of Marco Polo. 1298.

1. Provide the **historical context** for the excerpt above.

The excerpt above is discussing the silk roads and various amounts of trade that occurred there, it describes the wealth of the people and cultural exchange that happened on the road. Essentially, all you need to know is that the silk road was a major set of trade routes throughout Asia that made many wealthy, transferred much culture & intelligence as well as many foods.

2. Provide the **point of view** of the author or authors above. Support your claim with evidence from the excerpt itself (you may paraphrase, but do not quote).

Essentially, the author is an explorer who is taking notes on the differing practices placed upon traversing the silk roads. This can be supported by the fact that he is merely describing what is going on, in an European language, which clearly states (at least indirectly) that he is merely a spectator rather than a merchant on the road.