# Main Theme: Connectivity/ Integrated(ness) of the Early Modern World

**1st Main Question: In what way do the accounts demonstrate that the Early Modern World was as integrated as ours?**

**Secondary Question: What considerations should we keep in mind when reading these sort of sources?**

**Task ONE**

Tell me about the most interesting trip you have had abroad. (E.g. Unfortunately, my most interesting trip was not my honeymoon. The most terrifying trip, hence interesting, was my topographical trip to Brunei more than 20 years ago.)

Exchange your story with your friend/ gp.

Tell the class about your friend’s story. Organise it along these lines:

* What are some key points about a particular place you get from the account?
* What categories of information are included?
* How is the information organized?
* What impression of the place do you get from his/her account?

**Task TWO**

* Work through the first two readings in your small groups. Prepare to engage in a discussion with your instructor

**Gp 1:** “The Travels of Marco Polo,” 249-253.

Description of Chipangu and Great Khan. Year 1279.

* Gold
* “gold is abundant beyond all measure”
* Every inch of that Palace seems to be gold
* True? Or imagination of Polo? How might we verify this sort of claim?
* Might have blown merchants’ accounts out of proportion
  + “few merchants visit the country because it’s so far from the mainland, and thus it comes to pass that their gold is abundant beyond all measure”
* Check his account against those of visitors to Chipangu (including merchants, sailors etc.)
* Historical Archetype of deadly rivalry?
  + E.g. Battle of Tannenberg. Samsonov slapped von Rennenkampf in 1905. In Aug 1914, von Rennenkampf would not come to Samsonov’s rescue.
* What are some contemporary versions of the myth of Kamikaze?
  + WW2 young Japanese fighter pilots crashed into Allied Naval vessels
  + Pilots were the ‘divine wind’ that swept their enemies from the seas
  + Someone who takes great risks with little disregard for personal safety

**Gp 2:** “Traveling to China,” Francesco di Balduccio Pegolotti, *The Practice of Commerce, from the Italian.*

*Florence, 1310 to 1340*. A guide for merchants going to Cathay via Tana.

* What sort of information is given in this account?
  + Warnings such as the presence of armed Mongols from Tana to Astrakhan
  + Places of interest for merchants like wares in Urjench
* What does it indicate is important?
  + Letting beard grow long
  + Take women from Tana
  + Prepare food (flour and salt fish) for 25 day journey
  + What to do when fellow merchant dies (claim brother)
  + Buy Silk at Cathay
* Is this comparable to lonely planet guide/ *Rough Guides* of today?
  + Highly trade advice
  + No places of interest to visit for leisure
  + Things to do – get women, ride on donkeys
  + Routes to take, making it similar to lonely planet’s road trip guidesxc
* What sort of currency was used?
  + 4 x Balisci (paper money) = 1 x silver sommo YUAN DYNASTY
  + 8.5 x Genoese pounds = 1 x silver sommo
  + Gold florins
  + Ming dynasty reverted back to silver. Why??

“Malabar and the Maldives,” Adventures of Ibn Battuta, Dunn.

Year 1340. Mission from Delhi to China. Re-permission to build Buddhist shrine and trade.

**Gp 3:** 213-224

**Gp 4:** 225-237

* In your small group, construct 10 questions you would ask your classmates about the *Adventures of Ibn Battuta*. Write the questions on the white board provided.

**Lesson Closure**

**Reading Secondary Sources of Travels (in Class)**

**Gp 5:** “Inscription on Tianfei tablet,” in *China and Africa in the Middle Ages,* Teobaldo Filesi. David Morison trans.(London: Frank Cass, 1972),57-61.

“Zheng He: Peaceful Mariner and Diplomat,” China through a Lens, Xinhua News Agency, July 12, 2005, accessed at http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/zhenhe/134661.htm

What is the overall message about Zheng He and his travels that the article wants to convey?

* They were extremely loyal to the dynasty and highly religious.

Why paint a picture of Chinese as peaceful? What present day purpose might this play?

* Justify China’s expansion of power – acting as the good guy taking on bad America. Their claims over South China Sea are supposedly to ensure stability in the region
* Remind Chinese citizens that China is an awesome place. Keep them satisfied.

Check out highlighted text