

## The Effect of the Mongols on Trade.

Along with Western missionaries, traders from the West (particularly from Genoa) began to arrive in the Mongol domains, mostly in Persia and eventually farther east.

The Mongols were quite receptive to this. This attitude, which facilitated contacts with West Asia and Europe, contributed to the beginning of what we could call a "global history," or at least a Eurasian history.

The Mongols always favored trade. Their nomadic way of life caused them to recognize the importance of trade from the very earliest times and, unlike the Chinese, they had a positive attitude toward merchants and commerce.

The Confucian Chinese professed to be disdainful of trade and merchants, whom they perceived to be a parasitical group that did not produce anything and were involved only in the exchange of goods. Mongols altered that attitude and in fact sought to facilitate international trade [also see [The Mongols in China: Life for Merchants under Mongol Rule](#)].

In China, for example, the Mongols increased the amount of [paper money](#) in circulation and guaranteed the value of that paper money in precious metals. They also built many roads — though this was only partly to promote trade — these roads were mainly used to facilitate the Mongols' rule over China.

Under Mongol rule, merchants had a higher status than they had in traditional China. During their travels they could rest and secure supplies through a [postal-station system](#) that the Mongols had established.

The postal-station system was, of course, originally devised to facilitate the transmission of official mail from one part of the empire to another. Set up approximately every 20 miles along the major trade routes and stocked with supplies of food, horses, and lodging, the stations were an incredible boon to all travelers, whether they were traveling for business or otherwise.

Under the Mongols, merchants also had the benefit of not being faced with confiscatory taxation, as was the case during the rule of the traditional Chinese dynasties.

Support for trade characterized not only Mongol policy in China but their policy throughout their domains. In Persia the Mongols granted higher tax breaks and benefits to traders in an effort to promote commerce. The Mongols even tried to introduce paper money into Persia — though this would become merely a failed experiment. Nonetheless, the attempt indicates the desire of the Mongols to provide additional assistance to traders.