**Document C (modified excerpt)**

**Chinese Perceptions of the Mongols: Epitaph for the Honorable Menggu**

**1274**

*Chinese responses to Mongol rule varied greatly. To some, the Mongols were simply foreign conquerors and therefore unlawful Chinese rulers. Marco Polo, who was in China at the time, reported that some Mongol officials or their Muslim representatives treated Chinese “just like slaves,” which created outrage and hostility among the Chinese. This document illustrates another Chinese perspective on the Mongols. It comes from a short biography of a Mongol official named Menggu, which was written by a well-educated Chinese scholar on the occasion of Menggu’s death. Intended to be inscribed on stone and buried with the Mongol officer, it emphasizes the ways in which Menggu adapted to Chinese ways of governing. These obituaries were an established form of Chinese historical writing, usually called for by the children of the deceased.*

…In the fourth month of 1236, the court deemed Menggu capable of handling Zhangde, so promoted him…to be its governor…Because regulations were **lax**, the soldiers took advantage of their victory to **plunder**. Even in cities and marketplaces, some people kept their doors closed in the daytime. As soon as Menggu arrived, he took charge. Knowing the people’s **grievances**, he issued an order, “Those who oppose the people will be dealt with according to the law. Craftsmen, merchants, and shopkeepers, you must each go about your work with your doors open, peaceably attending to your business without fear. Farmers, you must be content with your lands and exert yourselves diligently according to the seasons. I will instruct or punish those who mistreat you.” After this order was issued, the violent became obedient and no one any longer dared violate the laws. Farmers in the fields and travelers on the roads felt safe, and people began to enjoy life…

…The house where Menggu lived when he governed Zhangde nearly forty years ago, and the fields from which he obtained food then, were just adequate to keep out the wind and rain and supply enough to eat. When he died there were no estates or leftover wealth to leave his sons or grandsons. Therefore they had to model themselves on him and concentrate on governing in a way that would bring peace and safety, show love for the people, and benefit all.

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| **Word Bank**  lax – not strict  plunder – steal  grievances – complaints |

**Source:** Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed. And trans., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*. New York: Free Press, 1991, 192-94.

**Retrieved from:** Strayer, Robert W. *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*. N.p.: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Print.