

Document B (excerpted)

Marco Polo was a traveler and writer who went from his home in Venice all the way to China, which was at that time ruled by the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan (grandson of Chinggis Khan). Polo remained in China for 17 years, returned home to Europe, and then wrote his famous book "Travels," in which he described what he saw in China. Here he discusses the tactics used by the Mongols in battle.

Their arms are bows, iron maces, and in some instances, spears; but the first is the weapon at which they are most expert, being accustomed, from children, to employ it in their sports. They wear defensive armor made from buffalo and hides of other beasts, dried by the fire, and thus rendered extremely hard and strong. They are brave in battle, almost to desperation, setting little value upon their lives, and exposing themselves without hesitation of all manner of danger. Their **disposition** is cruel.

They are capable of supporting every kind of **privation**, and when there is a necessity for it, can live for a month on the milk of their mares, and upon such wild animals, as they may chance to catch. Their horses are fed upon grass alone, and do not require barley or other grain. The men are trained to remain on horseback during two days and two nights, without dismounting. . . . No people on earth can surpass them in **fortitude** under difficulties, nor show greater patience under wants of every kind. They are most **obedient** to their chiefs, and are maintained at small expense.

Source: Marco Polo, Travels, 1274 to 1290

Word Bank:

disposition – state of mind

privation – lack of the usual comforts or necessities of life

fortitude – mental and emotional strength

obedient – willing to obey

Full Text Available: Komroff, Manuel, ed. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. W.W. Norton and Company, 1926.