

The Travels of Marco Polo as Told by Marco Polo (1254-1324)

Excerpt from *The Travels of Marco Polo*

On the Tartars [Tartars is the name that Marco Polo used for the Mongols]

Now that I have begun speaking of the Tartars [Mongols], I will tell you more about them. The Tartars never remain fixed [in one place], but as the winter approaches remove [move] to the plains of a warmer region, to find sufficient pasture [land for grazing] for their cattle; and in summer they frequent [stay in] cold areas in the mountains, where there is water and verdure [grass], and their cattle are free from the annoyance of horse-flies and other biting insects.

Their huts or tents are formed of rods covered with felt, exactly round, and nicely put together, so they can gather them into one bundle, and make them up as packages, which they carry along with them in their migrations [travels] upon a sort of car [cart] with four wheels. When they have occasion to set them up again, they always make the entrance front to the south.

The women attend to their trading concerns, buy and sell, and provide everything necessary for their husbands and their families; the time of the men is devoted entirely to hunting, hawking, and matters that relate to the military life. They have the best falcons in the world, and also the best dogs.

Investigating Primary Sources

Historians disagree about whether all of Marco Polo's stories are true. Historians use certain words to talk about what is *fact* (something that is known to be true and can be proven) and what is *opinion* (an idea, belief, or unprovable idea), including these terms:

Verifiable: Information that can be proven by examining other sources.

Unverifiable: Information that *cannot* be proven by examining other sources.