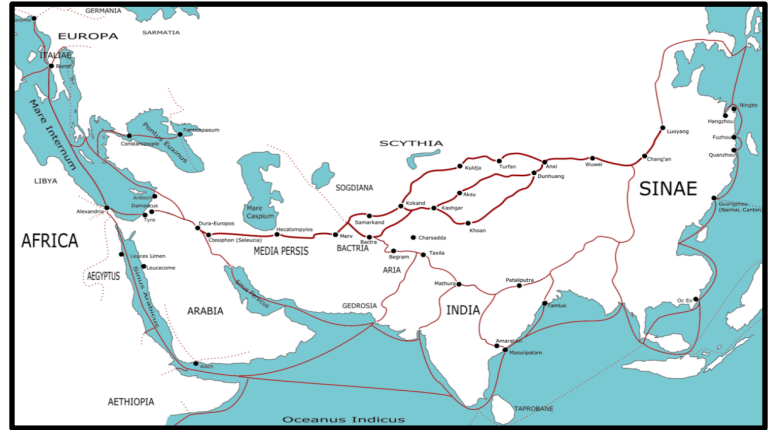


## Primary Sources from the Silk Roads: “Sourcing” the Documents

The Silk Roads might be the most iconic trade network of the ancient world. While it’s not a road made of silk, the Silk Road Network revolutionized how connected the people of the ancient world became. So let’s take a look, and try out a few AP Skills while we’re at it.



Steps for this activity:

1. Homework: Read the two primary sources from the Silk Roads.
  - a. Warning! These sources are longer and more difficult than sources we have read so far in this course! So, should you give up at the first word you do not know or if the reading gets tough? Absolutely not! There will be many times in this class that you come across words that are unfamiliar to you. So look them up! Ask Siri, Alexa, or Google if your fingers are tired, but try your best. At the end of the day, you will likely get the main ideas even if you don’t understand every vocabulary word.
2. In Class: Analyze the “Sourcing” of the documents and fill in the graphic organizer.
  - a. Remember what you’ve learned, and check out the Heimler’s History Video for more information on the types of sourcing for more information. Your choices are:
    - i. **Historical Situation:** What is going on in the time period that affects the author or source? What may have caused the document to be written in this way?
    - ii. **Audience:** Who is this written for? How does that affect how you interpret the document?
    - iii. **Purpose:** Why is the Author writing it? What is their intent or goal? Is this document reliable?
    - iv. **Point of View:** How could the author’s nationality, class, race, gender, religion, occupation, etc. influence their views? How could those things influence the way the document is written? Is this document reliable based on the information from the source or the author?

*Then, in addition to discussing the above, you must include the following:*

- v. **Why:** Why does the “HAPP” that you chose matter? Does it make the document more or less reliable? Does it change how we interpret the document? Does it impact how we respond to the prompt in any way?
  - b. Remember that the entire time you’re analyzing documents like this, you’re thinking about a possible prompt. So for us, that prompt is: *“To what extent did trade routes like the Silk Roads link Afro-Eurasia?”*

## Primary Sources from the Silk Roads: "Sourcing" the Documents

*"To what extent did trade routes like the Silk Roads link Afro-Eurasia?"*

1. Choose **TWO** HAPP-Y Elements (NOT ALL FOUR!) to analyze for each of the sources below.
2. Don't forget to add the WHY to your analysis. Why does the Historical Situation, Audience, Purpose, or POV matter for the source?
3. Use your outside knowledge to help you.
4. Use complete sentences, just like you would in an essay.

You should be gearing your response toward the prompt: *"To what extent did trade routes like the Silk Roads link Afro-Eurasia?"*

Document 1: <i>The Voyage around the Erythrean Sea</i>	#1	
	#2	
Document 2: <i>The Peoples of the West</i>	#1	

	#2	
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**Document 1: [The Voyage around the Erythraean Sea](#)**

The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (or ‘Voyage around the Erythraean Sea’) is from ca. 50-ish CE. It is written by an anonymous, Greek-speaking Egyptian merchant. Because it’s so descriptive, historians generally believe that the author traveled to most if not all of the lands mentioned in the document. Whoever he is, the author provides a wealth of information. He discusses the lengths and conditions of the routes and when the routes are the calmest. He also describes the key docks and stores, the local people, and the imports and exports of the region.

The translator notes that you might want to know that a measurement of “10 Greek Stadion” is the same as 1 Mile, or 1.6 Kilometers.

6. There are imported into these places, undressed cloth made in Egypt for the Berbers; robes from Arsinoe; cloaks of poor quality dyed in colors; double-fringed linen mantles; many articles of flint glass, and others of murrhine, made in Diospolis; and brass, which is used for ornament and in cut pieces instead of coin; sheets of soft copper, used for cooking-utensils and cut up for bracelets and anklets for the women; iron, which is made into spears used against the elephants and other wild beasts, and in their wars. Besides these, small axes are imported, and adzes and swords; copper drinking-cups, round and large; a little coin for those coming to the market; wine of Laodicea and Italy, not much; olive oil, not much; for the king, gold and silver plate made after the fashion of the country, and for clothing, military cloaks, and thin coats of skin, of no great value. Likewise from the district of Ariaca across this sea, there are imported Indian iron, and steel, and Indian cotton cloth; the broad cloth called *monache* and that called *sagimtogene*, and girdles, and coats of skin and mallow-colored cloth, and a few muslins, and colored lac. There are exported from these places ivory, and tortoise-shell and rhinoceros-horn. The most from Egypt is brought to this market from the month of January, to September, that is, from Tybi to Thoth; but seasonably they put to sea about the month of September.

7. From this place the Arabian Gulf trends toward the east and becomes narrowest just before the Gulf of Avalites. After about four thousand stadia, for those sailing eastward along the same coast, there are other Berber market-towns, known as the "far-side" ports; lying at intervals one after the other, without harbors but having roadsteads where ships can anchor and lie in good weather. The first is called Avalites; to this place the voyage from Arabia to the far-side coast is the shortest. Here there is a small market-town called Avalites, which must be reached by boats and rafts. There are imported into this place, flint glass, assorted; juice of sour grapes from Diospolis; dressed cloth, assorted, made for the Berbers; wheat, wine, and a little tin. There are exported from the same place, and sometimes by the Berbers themselves crossing on rafts to Ocelis and Muza on the opposite shore, spices, a little ivory, tortoise-shell, and a very little myrrh, but better than the rest. And the Berbers who live in the place are very unruly.

8. After Avalites there is another market-town, better than this, called Malao, distant a sail of about eight hundred stadia. The anchorage is an open roadstead, sheltered by a spit running out from the east. Here the natives are more peaceable. There are imported into this place the things already mentioned, and many tunics, cloaks from Arsinoe, dressed and dyed; drinking-cups, sheets of soft copper in small quantity, iron, and gold and silver coin, not much. There are exported from these places myrrh, a little frankincense (that known as "far-side"), the harder cinnamon, *duaca*, Indian copal and *macir*, which are imported into Arabia; and slaves, but rarely.

45. Now the whole country of India has very many rivers, and very great ebb and flow of the tides; increasing at the new moon, and at the full moon for three days, and falling off during the intervening days of the moon. But about Barygaza it is much greater, so that the bottom is suddenly seen, ... and now it is dry where ships were sailing just before; and the rivers, under the inrush of the flood tide, ... are driven upwards more strongly against their natural current, for many stadia.

46. For this reason entrance and departure of vessels is very dangerous to those who are inexperienced or who come to this market-town for the first time. For the rush of waters at the incoming tide is irresistible, and the anchors cannot hold against it; so that large ships are caught up by the force of it, turned broadside on through the speed of the current, and so driven on the shoals and wrecked; and smaller boats are over-turned; and those that have been turned aside among the channels by the receding waters at the ebb, are left on their sides, and if not held on an even keel by props, the flood tide comes upon them suddenly and under the first head of the current they are filled with water. ...

48. Inland from this place and to the east, is the city called Ozene, formerly a royal capital; from this place are brought down all things needed for the welfare of the country about Barygaza, and many things for our trade : agate and carnelian, Indian muslins and mallow cloth, and much ordinary cloth. Through this same region and from the upper country is brought the spikenard that comes through Poclais; that is, the Caspapyrene and Paropanisene and Cabolitic and that brought through the adjoining country of Scythia; also costus and bdellium.

49. There are imported into this market-town, wine, Italian preferred, also Laodicean and Arabian; copper, tin, and lead; coral and topaz; thin clothing and inferior sorts of all kinds; bright-colored girdles a cubit wide; storax, sweet clover, flint glass, realgar, antimony, gold and silver coin, on which there is a profit when exchanged for the money of the country; and ointment, but not very costly and not much. And for the King there are brought into those places very costly vessels of silver, singing boys, beautiful maidens for the harem, fine wines, thin clothing of the finest weaves, and the choicest ointments. There are exported from these places spikenard, costus, bdellium, ivory, agate and carnelian, lycium, cotton cloth of all kinds, silk cloth, mallow cloth, yarn, long pepper and such other things as are brought here from the various market-towns. Those bound for this market-town from Egypt make the voyage favorably about the month of July, that is Epiphi.

## Document 2: [“The Peoples of the West” from the \*Weilue\* by Yu Huan](#)

This is a Chinese account composed between 239 and 265 CE (AD). It is a difficult document for historians because the borders were always changing and many people were nomadic. Yu Huan, the author, lived in a northern kingdom that had formed after the breakup of the Han Dynasty called “Wei.” Its location was very friendly to trade, even after the Han Dynasty fell apart.

Most historians agree that Yu Huan never traveled abroad himself. He stayed in China. However, he had a lot of information from the people that China traded with to the west. He also had a lot of information on the trade routes.

The translator for this document struggled with the names of some locations or sea routes because the information is slim and many of those places are no longer called what they were back in the classical era. But the translator did his best, so bear with him as you read. You’ll notice question marks when he was not entirely sure of the location.

### Section 11 - Da Qin (Roman territory/Rome)

The kingdom of Da Qin (Rome)<sup>1</sup> is also called Lijian.<sup>2</sup> It is west of Anxi (Parthia) and Tiaozi (Characene and Susiana), and west of the Great Sea.<sup>3</sup>

From the city of Angu (Gerrha)<sup>4</sup>, on the frontier of Anxi (Parthia), you take a boat and cut directly across to Haixi (‘West of the Sea’ = Egypt).<sup>5</sup> With favourable winds it takes two months; if the winds are slow, perhaps a year; if there is no wind, perhaps three years.<sup>6</sup>

The country (that you reach) is west of the sea (*haixi*), which is why it is called Haixi (literally: ‘West of the Sea’ = Egypt). There is a river (the Nile) flowing out of the west of this country, and then there is another great sea (the Mediterranean). The city of (Wu) Chisan (Alexandria)<sup>7</sup> is in Haixi (Egypt).

From below this country you go north to reach the city of Wudan (Tanis?).<sup>8</sup> You (then) head southwest and cross a river (the Sebannitus branch of the Nile?) by boat, which takes a day. You head southwest again, and again cross a river (the Canopis branch of the Nile?) by boat, which takes another day.<sup>9</sup> There are, in all, three major cities [that you come to].<sup>10</sup>

Now, if you leave the city of Angu (Gerrha) by the overland route, you go north to Haibei (‘North of the Sea’ - the lands between Babylonia and Jordan), then west to Haixi (Egypt),<sup>11</sup> then turn south to go through the city of Wuchisan (Alexandria). After crossing a river, which takes a day by boat, you circle around the coast (to the region of Apollonia, the port of Cyrene). (From there, i.e. the region of Apollonia) six days is generally enough to cross the (second) great sea (the Mediterranean) to reach that country (Da Qin = Rome).<sup>12</sup>

This country (the Roman Empire) has more than four hundred smaller cities and towns. It extends several thousand *li* in all directions.<sup>13</sup> The king has his capital (that is, the city of Rome) close to the mouth of a river (the Tiber).<sup>14</sup> The outer walls of the city are made of stone.

This region has pine trees, cypress, sophora, catalpa, bamboo, reeds, poplars, willows, parasol trees, and all sorts of plants.<sup>15</sup> The people cultivate the five grains [traditionally: rice, glutinous and non-glutinous millet, wheat and beans], and they raise horses, mules, donkeys, camels and silkworms.<sup>16</sup> (They have) a tradition of amazing conjuring. They can produce fire from their mouths, bind and then free themselves, and juggle twelve balls with extraordinary skill.<sup>17</sup>

The ruler of this country is not permanent. When disasters result from unusual phenomena, they unceremoniously replace him, installing a virtuous man as king, and release the old king, who does not dare show resentment.<sup>18</sup>

The common people are tall and virtuous like the Chinese, but wear *hu* ('Western') clothes. They say they originally came from China, but left it.<sup>19</sup>

They have always wanted to communicate with China but, Anxi (Parthia), jealous of their profits, would not allow them to pass (through to China).<sup>20</sup>

The common people can write in *hu* ('Western') script.<sup>21</sup> They have multi-storeyed public buildings and private; (they fly) flags, beat drums, (and travel in) small carriages with white roofs, and have a postal service with relay sheds and postal stations, like in the Middle Kingdom (China).

From Anxi (Parthia) you go around Haibei ('North of the Sea' – the lands between Babylonia and Jordan) to reach this country.<sup>22</sup>

The people (of these countries) are connected to each other. Every 10 *li* (4.2 km) there is a *ting* (relay shed or changing place), and every 30 *li* (12.5 km) there is a *zhi* (postal station).<sup>23</sup> There are no bandits or thieves, but there are fierce tigers and lions that kill those travelling on the route. If you are not in a group, you cannot get through.<sup>24</sup>

This country (Rome) has installed dozens of minor kings. The king's administrative capital (Rome) is more than 100 *li* (42 km) around.<sup>25</sup> There is an official Department of Archives.

The king has five palaces at 10 *li* (4.2 km) intervals. He goes out at daybreak to one of the palaces and deals with matters until sunset and then spends the night there. The next day he goes to another palace and, in five days makes a complete tour. They have appointed thirty-six leaders who discuss events frequently.<sup>26</sup> If one leader does not show up, there is no discussion. When the king goes out for a walk, he always orders a man to follow him holding a leather bag. Anyone who has something to say throws his or her petition into the bag. When he returns to the palace, he examines them and determines which are reasonable.<sup>27</sup>

They use glass to make the pillars and table utensils in the palaces.<sup>28</sup> They manufacture bows and arrows.

They divide the various branch principalities of their territory into small countries such as that of the king of Zesan (Azania?),<sup>29</sup> the king of Lüfen (Leucos Limen),<sup>30</sup> the king of Qielan (Wadi Sirhan),<sup>31</sup> the king of Xiandu (Leukê Komè),<sup>32</sup> the king of Sifu (Petra),<sup>33</sup> (and that of) the king of Yuluo (Karak).<sup>34</sup> There are so many other small kingdoms it is impossible to give details on each one.

## Section 12 – Products of Da Qin (Roman territory)

This country produces fine linen.<sup>1</sup> They make gold and silver coins. One gold coin is equal to ten silver coins.<sup>2</sup>

They have fine brocaded cloth that is said to be made from the down of 'water-sheep'. It is called Haixi ('Egyptian') cloth. This country produces the six domestic animals, which are all said to come from the water.<sup>3</sup>

It is said that they not only use sheep's wool, but also bark from trees, or the silk from wild cocoons,<sup>4</sup> to make brocade, mats, pile rugs, woven cloth and curtains, all of them of good quality, and with brighter colours than those made in the countries of Haidong ("East of the Sea").<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, they regularly make a profit by obtaining Chinese silk, unravelling it, and making fine *hu* ('Western') silk damasks.<sup>6</sup> That is why this country trades with Anxi (Parthia) across the middle of the sea. The seawater is bitter and unable to be drunk, which is why it is rare for those who try to make contact to reach China.

The mountains (of this country) produce nine-coloured jewels (fluorite) of inferior quality. They change colour on different occasions from blue-green to red, yellow, white, black, green, purple, fiery red, and dark blue.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays nine-coloured stones of the same type are found in the Yiwu Shan (a mountain range east of Hami).<sup>8</sup>

In the third Yangjia year (CE 134), the king of Shule (Kashgar), Chen Pan [who had been made a hostage at the court of the Kushan emperor, for some period between 114 and 120, and was later placed on the throne of Kashgar by the Kushans],<sup>9</sup> offered a blue (or green) gem and a golden girdle from Haixi (Egypt).<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the *Xiyu Jiutu* ('Ancient Sketch of the Western Regions') now says that both Jibin (Kapisha-Gandhāra) and Tiaozhi (Characene and Susiana) produce precious stones approaching the quality of jade.<sup>11</sup>

**Da Qin (the Roman Empire) has plenty of:**

- (1) gold
- (2) silver
- (3) copper
- (4) iron
- (5) lead
- (6) tin
- (7) 'divine tortoises' – tortoises used for divination
- (8) white horses with red manes
- (9) fighting cocks
- (10) rhinoceroses
- (11) sea turtle shell
- (12) black bears
- (13) 'red hornless (or immature) dragons' (which produced the famous "dragons' blood" resin)
- (14) 'poison-avoiding rats' = mongooses
- (15) large cowries
- (16) mother-of-pearl
- (17) carnelian
- (18) 'southern gold'
- (19) kingfisher feathers
- (20) ivory
- (21) coloured veined jade
- (22) 'bright moon' pearls
- (23) luminescent 'pearls' or pearl-like jewels (probably large diamonds)
- (24) genuine white pearls
- (25) yellow amber
- (26) (red) coral



- (27) ten varieties of glass: red, white, black, green, yellow, blue-green, dark blue, light blue, fiery red, purple
  - (28) a magnificent jade
  - (29) white carnelian?
  - (30) rock crystal or transparent glass
  - (31) various semi-precious gems
  - (32) realgar
  - (33) orpiment
  - (34) nephrite
  - (35) multicoloured jade or gemstone
  - (36) ten sorts of wool rugs: yellow, white, black, green, purple, fiery red, deep red, dark blue, golden yellow, light blue and back to yellow
  - (37) finely patterned multicoloured wool carpets
  - (38) nine colours of multicoloured lower quality wool carpets (kilims rather than knotted carpets?)
  - (39) gold threaded embroidery
  - (40) polychrome (warp twill) fine silk or chiffon
  - (41) woven gold cloth
  - (42) purple *chi* cloth
  - (43) *falu* cloth
  - (44) purple *chiqu* cloth
  - (45) asbestos cloth
  - (46) fine silk gauze cloth
  - (47) shot silk, 'clinging cloth' or 'cloth with swirling patterns'?
  - (48) *dudai* cloth
  - (49) cotton-wool cloth?
  - (50) multicoloured *tao* cloth
  - (51) crimson curtains woven with gold
  - (52) multicoloured 'spiral curtains'?
  - (53) *yiwei*
  - (54) myrrh
  - (55) storax
  - (56) *diti*
  - (57) rosemary
  - (58) probably *dhūṇa* – an incense made from the resin of the Indian Sal tree.
  - (59) *bai fuzi* – lit. 'white aconite' – but it is not clear what plant this refers to here. See notes.
  - (60) frankincense
  - (61) turmeric, saffron or tulips
  - (62) rue oil
  - (63) Oriental lovage – *Lysimachia foenum-graecum* Hance
- Altogether (they have) twelve types of aromatic plants.<sup>13</sup>

### Section 13 – The Sea Route to Da Qin (Roman territory)

As well as the overland route from Da Qin (Roman territory) through Haibei ('North of the Sea' – the lands between Egypt and Parthia), one can also follow the sea south along the seven commanderies of Jiaozhi (stretching down the north Vietnamese coast),<sup>1</sup> which are in contact with foreign countries.<sup>2</sup> Nearby (or 'North')<sup>3</sup> is a waterway (the Red River)<sup>4</sup> which leads to Yongchang<sup>5</sup> in Yizhou (a commandery in present-day southern Yunnan).<sup>6</sup> That's why rare items come from Yongchang. In early times only the maritime routes (to Da Qin) were discussed because they didn't know there were overland routes.<sup>7</sup>