

Research paper on marco polo major accomplishments

[Parts of the World, Asia](#)



Marco Polo

Introduction

Marco Polo was an Italian merchant traveler who immortalized his travel stories to Central Asia and China by giving an account of his journey in his famous book 'Description of the World' aka Livres des merveilles du monde in French. There are few European travelers who voyaged to China years before Marco Polo but the journey undertaken by Polo was the most remarkable. He spent 24 years of his life travelling in Asia and China, having spent 17 of those years in China alone. Marko Polo served as an inspiration to many subsequent European explorers. Marco Polo's book carries a good deal of information about jewels and merchandise abounding in Asia and China. He was flabbergasted by what he saw during his trip through the countries of East and his account of the same contributed extensively to the development of world culture. Marco Polo's travels through Asia promoted interest in this far off land, stimulated trade and motivated other explorers, especially Christopher Columbus to follow in his footsteps.

Who was Marco Polo?

Marco Polo was a globetrotter and a Venetian merchant. Born in Venice in 1254 to affluent Venetian merchant parents, Marco Polo lost his mother when he was very young. Marco Polo's father and uncle Niccolo and Maffeo Polo, who were successful jewel merchants, spent over a decade exploring the faraway lands of Asia and China for trade and fortune during which they met Kublai Khan, the Mongol ruler whose grandfather, Genghis Khan, was a conqueror of Northeast Asia. They returned to Venice in 1269 but only to set

sail to Asia again with Marco Polo accompanying them this time. Their route to China traversed through modern Akka (now Israel) to the Persian Gulf, navigating to the north through Iran on to the Aral Sea, further through the Pamir Mountains and Gobi desert to Shangtu.

After four years of travelling amidst tortuosity and hardship, finally Marco Polo reached China and met Kublai Khan. Khan's admiration of Marco earned him important position in the ruler's court. Marco was appointed as a special envoy. Marco was dispatched to remote corners of Asia including India, Burma and Tibet, among others. Marco's interest in Chinese culture resulted in his learning four languages. Marco was later promoted to the post of a governor of a Chinese city and after that an official of the Privy Council. Marco Polo stayed in the company of Kublai Khan for 17 long years when he attained vast knowledge as regards the Mongol empire. He was impressed by Khan's effective communication system, use of paper money, the economy and the large scale of production. His return journey comprised mainly of sea route via the coast of South-East Asia and Hindustan (Now India) with stop-overs at many sea ports along the way. In 1295, he reached Venice accomplishing the greatest odyssey of all time, both distance and time wise.

Major Accomplishments while in China

Marco Polo's accomplishment in China was enormous in terms of earning money, respect, power and positions. Marco with his command over four languages won the heart of Kublai Khan and soon he was appointed as an envoy in Khan's court. He went on a number of errands to China, India and

Burma. While in service for Kublai Khan, Marco got the opportunity to visit many places that were never paid a visit by any European before. As years wore on, Marco Polo was later promoted to the post a governor of a Chinese city. In 1277 he became an official of the Privy Council and served for three years in Yanzhou, a city located at the northeast of Nanking as a tax inspector.

Marco Polo amassed immense wealth during his stay in China for 17 years. He wanted to return to Venice as he apprehended if Kublai Khan, then in his late 70s, died then it would become difficult for them to move out of the country with the vast wealth. Reluctantly Khan allowed Marco to return home on one condition that he would have to escort a Mongol princess to Persia to get married to a Persian prince.

The expedition of Marco Polo to China was fraught with disease, climate extremities and bandits. Once while shopping in a small town in Hormuz, Marco Polo and his companions were ambushed by a band of ferocious bandits. All their belongings were stolen and they were locked up for the night. With great effort, Marco Polo and his father escaped the clutch of death.

Description of the World

Marco Polo's book 'Description of the World' made him a legendary figure. About three years after Marco Polo's returning to Venice, while commanding a ship in a combat against the rival city of Genoa he was apprehended and put into a Genoese prison. There he befriended a fellow prisoner called Rustichello who was a writer. He shared the stories of his travel with

Rustichello who transcribed the account in a paper and later published it as a book named 'The Description of the World' aka 'The Travels of Marco Polo'. The book, carrying the descriptive account of China, the influence of Mongol empire and the outlandish customs and culture of India and Africa, turned into one of the most popular books of medieval Europe. Marco Polo became famous overnight. The book printed in different languages including Italian, French and Latin soon became the most read in European province. Marco Polo's book is known in different names including ' Book of the Marvels of the World' or ' Livre des merveilles du monde' in French, ' Description of the World' or ' De mirabilibus mundi' in Latin and ' The Million' or ' Italian Il Milione' or ' Oriente Poliano' in Italian and ' The Travels of Marco Polo' in English. Though the book earned Marco Polo publicity and a nickname Marco Milione, the account of his journey was not taken as true facts of his expedition, most of the readers having considered it as a fiction, a figment of Polo's imagination.

What did Marco Polo bring back?

Marco Polo brought back a good amount of silk route products, vast knowledge about the far-flung places and maps to guide subsequent travelers to embark on similar venture. For several centuries the Great Silk Road served as a connector of complex trade routes from Europe and Asia. Trade caravans, merchants, warriors and millions of people have traveled the Silk route fearless of the miles and miles of parched deserts and treacherous roads. One of the most important items carried along these routes was swathes of fine silk with an array of other trade products

including jade, ivory, gold, glasses, spices, horses, cotton and incense. The Mongolian empire ruled by the Khan dynasty monopolized the markets selling jewelry, fabrics, furs and other luxurious items. Marco Polo brought many of these silk route items along with him on his return voyage.

Not only silk route products, he also brought back a lot of information regarding the exotic places he had been to across Asia and China. From the stories described in his book we come to know of the abundance of riches in China. Out of the description of the summer palace of Kublai Khan alone, we get a fair idea about the amount of wealth the empire was standing on.

Marco Polo described the palace as one of the exquisite architectures he had ever seen. The walls were adorned with gold and silver with the hall being so large that it easily could accommodate 6, 000 diners at once. Marco Polo also provided a good deal of information regarding the paper currency, coal, asbestos and about the exotic culture of Asia and Africa. Marco was further very impressed by the communication system Kublai Khan put in place to maintain his vast empire. There were three main categories of communication out of which the first category was delivered on horseback, the second category using foot runners and the most important category served Kublai Khan using nonstop dispatch riders.

Expert and historians of the present generation are doing research on Marco's travel accounts. Marco's stories which were considered as fiction during his life time have been validated later on by many 18th century explorers. Some of the information that he shared in his travelogue, though not valued during his life time, later helped the geographers create maps of the 14th century. He was the first man ever to gauge the distance he

traveled, how long he traveled and also to capture the routes across Asia and China.

How did Marco Polo's discoveries stimulate other explores?

Marco Polo's travel accounts stimulated the later explorers to embark on a similar venture to embrace the unknown. Fascinated by Polo's book Christopher Columbus decided to take a trip down to China by the west route, but instead he discovered West Indies and America. Columbus's expedition influenced Ferdinand Magellan who led the first undertaking to circumnavigate the globe. Portuguese explorers too were greatly influenced by Marco Polo's travels and many Portuguese travelers made a trip to Africa in search of trade and fortune.

Analysis of Sources

The primary sources of documents that I used include the articles 'Marco Polo Went to China After All, Study Suggests' by Jennie Cohen, 'Travels of Marco Polo' from abcteach. com, 'The Travels of Marco Polo' published on bio, 'Marco Polo - Great Silk Road' published on Advantour, 'Marco Polo and His Travels' by Silk Road Foundation and 'Marco Polo' by Matt Rosenberg. The reasons for my selecting these articles as primary source of information for writing the essay is first of all, the articles give authentic account of Marco Polo's journey without exaggerating facts. Secondly, the articles are well-written and descriptive. For example, from the article 'Marco Polo - Great Silk Road' I have collected a good deal of information regarding Silk Road, what were the items traded there and how importance of that road in history. With that help, I have been able to learn about Silk Road and express

my ideas into the paper. Similarly, from the article 'The Travels of Marco Polo' published on Bio, I gathered facts about Marco Polo's coming in contact with Rustichello and how he helped him write his book.

Rest of the sources mentioned in the reference page including 'Marco Polo and the Reopening of the Ancient Silk Road' by Ballard & Tighe, 'Chapter Two: A Journey Filled with Adventures' published on people. chinese and others are secondary source of information used in this article. They are secondary because these sources didn't give detailed account of Marco Polo's life. Rather they highlighted only an important chapter or story of his life. These articles helped me give detailed information about a particular event in Marco Polo's life. For example, the article published on people. chinese gave an account of Marco Polo's escape from bandits which helped me elaborate on Marco Polo's narrow escape from death.

Conclusion

Marco Polo was a famous Venetian merchant who travelled to China in the 13th century. His stay across the far-flung lands of Asia and China lasted for 24 years and he returned from the trip as a learned and wealthy man. He later detailed his travel journeys in his book "Description of the World' with the help of a writer called Rustichello. His book though earned him popularity galore was taken to be a fantasy by people who treated his stories as imagination. There are still debates over whether or not Marco Polo actually reached China. Besides sparking debate, his book proved to be an inspiration for many subsequent explorers including Columbus and Ferdinand who

directly and indirectly were influenced by his travel account and ventured to learn the unknown.

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