

PRIMARY SOURCE EVALUATION:
MARCO POLO FROM TRAVELS: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD

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This document is a thirteenth-century travelogue and was written by Rustichello da Pisa from tales expressed by Marco Polo, an Italian writer who happened to meet Polo while the two were in jail in Genoa, Italy. It was published in the Republic of Venice around the year 1300. The travelogue is composed in Old French and is based on the explanations of Polo's movements through Central Asia to China between 1271 to 1295.

This travel journal discusses Marco Polo, a trader, traveler, author and one of the most recognized explorers of Europe on the Silk Road, as well as the various regions and Asian cities he navigates, including ancient China. In any case, it was problematic to cross the Silk Road, as recorded by Marco Polo. The journey was long with the circumstances of an absurd environment for traders who had been on the highway for a few months. Similarly, crossing the Great Desert was struggling to learn, as it tried to discover food to eat and water to drink, and the equivalent is applied to see the field for the beasts¹.

Marco Polo is considered one of the most important and outstanding travelers in the world. Marco Polo used to record rumors and tend to spread the reality. For example, Marco Polo says that without nourishment and water they could go for a considerably long time. For a person who wants the necessities to navigate the Great Desert, it is not feasible to continue the business without food or water. In any situation, it is difficult to see if something of what he claims was true².

Another crooked reality in the source is about Mohomet being worshiped by the Khotan region's general public³. Similarly, Marco Polo understands that individuals in the lands of Pem

¹ Marco, Polo. From *Travels: The Description of the World*. In Walter D. Ward and Dennis Gainty, *Sources of World Societies*, vol. I, 23-28. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2011), p. 256.

² Ibid., 257

³ Western Europeans erroneously thought that Muslims worshipped a god named Mahomet (clearly written as Muhammad PBUH), who is the prophet of GOD and founder of Islam.

also worshipped Mohomet. He points out that both Pem and Khotan are administrated by the Great Khan⁴. It provides a note of Asian social unions that have all the characteristics to be strange. For example, when men leave their homes and stay away for more than twenty days, the spouse is allowed to obtain another life partner. What's more, when a wife leaves for a trip that apparently takes many days, he is qualified to get another spouse⁵.

As much as I understand that some of the documents presented in the story are exaggerated, I believe explicitly that the reader can have an idea of what the excursion looked like when he arrived on the Silk Road. For illustration, the part leads the reader to recognize the trials and lifestyles of the people experienced by Marco Polo on his tour to Silk Road. For this situation, I valued affiliations, social exercises, and financial activities, worship plans and another view that covers some ancient history. In addition, around that time, Jayakatwang, Duke of Kediri, rebelled and executed Kertanegara, ended the kingdom of Singhasari.

I think Marco Polo seemed self-honored and the period of research that ended up characterizing much of world history. He wants to represent that the world can be discovered. Marco Polo continuously represents the supernatural and the mysterious in his document. It reflects the "spiritual voices" that tourists can hear as they travel through the vast Lop Desert and the terrible creatures that no other European had ever encountered as rational. On different occasions, Marco Polo's movement records established a huge connection with European readers for quite some time after their adventure ended, such as Christopher Columbus. Another message conveyed by Marco Polo is that traveling to these Asian kingdoms is a lengthy, hazardous and arduous trip.

⁴ Kublai was the fifth Khagan (Great Khan) of the Mongol Empire , reigning from 1260 to 1294

⁵ Ibid., 257

Bibliography

Polo, Marco. "From Travels: The Description of the World." In Walter D. Ward and Dennis Gainty, *Sources of World Societies*, vol. I, 23-28. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2011.