

= Marco Polo =

Marco Polo ( / ˈmɑːrkoʊ ˈpoʊloʊ / ; Italian pronunciation : [ ˈmarko ˈpɔːlo ] ; 1254 ? January 8 ? 9 , 1324 ) was a Venetian merchant traveller whose travels are recorded in *Livres des merveilles du monde* ( Book of the Marvels of the World , also known as *The Travels of Marco Polo* , c . 1300 ) , a book that introduced Europeans to Central Asia and China .

He learned the mercantile trade from his father and uncle , Niccolò and Maffeo , who travelled through Asia and met Kublai Khan . In 1269 , they returned to Venice to meet Marco for the first time . The three of them embarked on an epic journey to Asia , returning after 24 years to find Venice at war with Genoa ; Marco was imprisoned and dictated his stories to a cellmate . He was released in 1299 , became a wealthy merchant , married , and had three children . He died in 1324 and was buried in the church of San Lorenzo in Venice .

Marco Polo was not the first European to reach China ( see Europeans in Medieval China ) , but he was the first to leave a detailed chronicle of his experience . This book inspired Christopher Columbus and many other travellers . There is a substantial literature based on Polo 's writings ; he also influenced European cartography , leading to the introduction of the Fra Mauro map .

= = Life = =

= = = Family origin = = =

Marco Polo was born in 1254 in Venice Republic . His exact date and place of birth are archivally unknown . Some historians mentioned that he was born on September 15 but that date is not endorsed by mainstream scholarship . Marco Polo 's birthplace is generally considered Venice , but also varies between Constantinople , and the island of Korčula . There is dispute as to whether the Polo family is of Venetian origin , as Venetian historical sources considered them to be of Dalmatian origin .

The first recorded Polo is Venetian Domenico Polo who was mentioned in 971 regarding the prohibition of trade with the Arabs . Later other Polos were also mentioned in the service of the realm . Whether they were related with the family of Marco Polo is uncertain , but this could indicate that his ancestors traveled between Venice and Dalmatia .

Some of the first indications of where his family originated and were resident come from Venetian documents and manuscripts . In the 1280 testament of Marco Polo 's homonymous uncle it is said that the uncle previously lived in Constantinople , and that his son Nicollo and daughter Marota at the time of testament lived in family house in Soldaia ( in Crimea ) . Some scholars argued that this account could go along with the note from *Il Milione* that his father and uncle , Niccolò and Maffeo Polo , in 1250 stayed in Constantinople with merchandise from Venice .

The non @-@ Venetian i.e. Dalmatian origin of his family was considered by the Venetians themselves since the 14th century ; in the *Chronicon Iustiniani* ( 1385 ) his family was mentioned among immigrants in Venice , in the *Cronaca di Venezia* ( 1446 ) along his family coat of arms it states " *antigamente vene de Dalmatia* " ( in ancient times came from Dalmatia ) , and the same again was recorded by Marino Sanuto the Younger in *Le Vite dei Dogi* ( 1552 ) . Sanuto also mentioned a captain from Korčula , Antonio di Polo . Marco Barbaro in his *Genealogie Patrizie* ( 1566 ) mentioned a document from 1033 by which time the family arrived from *ibenik* , but the year was probably symbolically chosen by Barbaro himself as in that is the year that Dalmatian cities were conquered by Venetian Doge Pietro II Orseolo . Arthur C. Moule cited two early 17th century Venetian manuscripts " *questi ueneno de dalmatia* " , " *Polo questi uene de Dalmatia* " .

Scholars etymologically argued that his family name derives from Latin Paulus , the name of a certain bird species , or like Albert t 'Serstevens considered - from Eastern origin . By the scholars is related to the three bird specifcs who in Old Croatian dialect from Poljica were called pol , while in the Old Venetian dialect pola / pole ; for the shorebird wader , and the jackdaw or chough , with all fitting the representation of the bird ( s ) in family coat of arms ( compared to Italian pollo , rooster ) .

However , the habitat of the shorebird is non @-@ existent on Kor?ula , and should be related to Venice laguna or wetland areas of Dalmatia like that of ?ibenik . The surname Polo seems related with other widespread Dalmatian surnames . The lack of evidence makes the Kor?ula theory ( probably under Ramusio influence ) as a specific birthplace strongly disputed , and even some Croatian scholars consider it justly invented .

= = = Early life and Asian travel = = =

In 1168 , his great @-@ uncle , Marco Polo , borrowed money and commanded a ship in Constantinople . His grandfather , Andrea Polo of the parish of San Felice , had three sons , Maffeo , yet another Marco , and the travelers father Niccolò . This genealogy , described by Ramusio , is not universally accepted as there 's no additional evidence to support it .

His father , Niccolò Polo , a merchant , traded with the Near East , becoming wealthy and achieving great prestige . Niccolò and his brother Maffeo set off on a trading voyage before Marco 's birth . In 1260 , Niccolò and Maffeo , while residing in Constantinople , then the capital of the Latin Empire , foresaw a political change ; they liquidated their assets into jewels and moved away . According to The Travels of Marco Polo , they passed through much of Asia , and met with the Kublai Khan , a Mongol ruler and founder of the Yuan dynasty . Their decision to leave Constantinople proved timely . In 1261 Michael VIII Palaiologos , the ruler of the Empire of Nicaea , took Constantinople , promptly burned the Venetian quarter and re @-@ established the Eastern Roman Empire . Captured Venetian citizens were blinded , while many of those who managed to escape perished aboard overloaded refugee ships fleeing to other Venetian colonies in the Aegean Sea .

Almost nothing is known about the childhood of Marco Polo until he was fifteen years old , excepting that he probably spent part of his childhood in Venice . Meanwhile , Marco Polo 's mother died , and an aunt and uncle raised him . He received a good education , learning mercantile subjects including foreign currency , appraising , and the handling of cargo ships ; he learned little or no Latin . His father later married with Floradise Polo ( née Trevisan ) .

In 1269 , Niccolò and Maffeo returned to their families in Venice , meeting young Marco for the first time . In 1271 , during the rule of Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo , Marco Polo ( at seventeen years of age ) , his father , and his uncle set off for Asia on the series of adventures that Marco later documented in his book . They returned to Venice in 1295 , 24 years later , with many riches and treasures . They had travelled almost 15 @,@ 000 miles ( 24 @,@ 000 km ) .

= = = Genoese captivity and later life = = =

Marco Polo returned to Venice in 1295 with his fortune converted in gemstones . At this time , Venice was at war with the Republic of Genoa . Polo armed a galley equipped with a trebuchet to join the war . He was probably caught by Genoans in a skirmish in 1296 , off the Anatolian coast between Adana and the Gulf of Alexandretta and not during the battle of Curzola ( September 1298 ) , off the Dalmatian coast . The latter claim is due to a later tradition ( 16th Century ) recorded by Giovanni Battista Ramusio .

He spent several months of his imprisonment dictating a detailed account of his travels to a fellow inmate , Rustichello da Pisa , who incorporated tales of his own as well as other collected anecdotes and current affairs from China . The book soon spread throughout Europe in manuscript form , and became known as The Travels of Marco Polo . It depicts the Polos ' journeys throughout Asia , giving Europeans their first comprehensive look into the inner workings of the Far East , including China , India , and Japan .

Polo was finally released from captivity in August 1299 , and returned home to Venice , where his father and uncle in the meantime had purchased a large palazzo in the zone named contrada San Giovanni Crisostomo ( Corte del Milion ) . For such a venture , Polo family probably invested profits from trading , and even many gemstones they brought from the East . The company continued its activities and Marco soon became a wealthy merchant . Marco and his uncle Maffeo financed other expeditions , but likely never left Venetian provinces , nor did return to the Silk Road and Asia .

Somewhere before 1300 , his father Niccolò died . In 1300 , he married Donata Badoèr , the daughter of Vitale Badoèr , a merchant . They had three daughters , Fantina ( married Marco Bragadin ) , Bellela ( married Bertuccio Querini ) , and Moreta .

In 1305 is mentioned in a Venetian document among local sea captains regarding the payment of taxes . His relation with certain Marco Polo , who in 1300 was mentioned with riots against the aristocratic government , and escaped the death penalty , as well riots from 1310 led by Bajamonte Tiepolo ( by mother side grandson of Trogir count Stjepko ?ubi? ) and Marco Querini , among whose rebels were Jacobello and Francesco Polo from another family branch , is unclear . Polo after 1305 is certainly again mentioned in Maffeo 's testament from 1309 ? 1310 , in 1319 document according which became owner of some estate of deceased father , and in 1321 , when from wife Donata bought part of her family property .

= = = Death = = =

In 1323 , Polo was confined to bed , due to illness . On January 8 , 1324 , despite physicians ' efforts to treat him , Polo was on his deathbed . To write and certify the will , his family requested Giovanni Giustiniani , a priest of San Procolo . His wife , Donata , and his three daughters were appointed by him as co @-@ executrices . The church was entitled by law to a portion of his estate ; he approved of this and ordered that a further sum be paid to the convent of San Lorenzo , the place where he wished to be buried . He also set free Peter , a Tartar servant , who may have accompanied him from Asia , and to whom Polo bequeath 100 lire of Venetian denari .

He divided up the rest of his assets , including several properties , among individuals , religious institutions , and every guild and fraternity to which he belonged . He also wrote @-@ off multiple debts including 300 lire that his sister @-@ in @-@ law owed him , and others for the convent of San Giovanni , San Paolo of the Order of Preachers , and a cleric named Friar Benvenuto . He ordered 220 soldi be paid to Giovanni Giustiniani for his work as a notary and his prayers .

The will , which was not signed by Polo , but was validated by the then relevant " signum manus " rule , by which the testator only had to touch the document to make it abide to the rule of law . Due to the Venetian law stating that the day ends at sunset , the exact date of Marco Polo 's death cannot be determined , but according to some scholars it was between the sunsets of January 8 and 9 , 1324 . Biblioteca Marciana , which holds the original copy of his testament , dates the testament in January 9 , 1323 , and gives the date of his death at some time in June 1324 .

= = Travels of Marco Polo = =

An authoritative version of Marco Polo 's book does not and cannot exist , for the early manuscripts differ significantly . The published editions of his book either rely on single manuscripts , blend multiple versions together , or add notes to clarify , for example in the English translation by Henry Yule . The 1938 English translation by A.C. Moule and Paul Pelliot is based on a Latin manuscript found in the library of the Cathedral of Toledo in 1932 , and is 50 % longer than other versions . Approximately 150 manuscript copies in various languages are known to exist , and before availability of the printing press discrepancies were inevitably introduced during copying and translation . The popular translation published by Penguin Books in 1958 by R.E. Latham works several texts together to make a readable whole .

Polo related his memoirs orally to Rustichello da Pisa while both were prisoners of the Genova Republic . Rustichello wrote *Devisement du Monde* in *Langues d 'Oil* , a lingua franca of crusaders and western merchants in the Orient . The idea probably was to create a handbook for merchants , essentially a text on weights , measures and distances .

= = = Narrative = = =

The book opens with a preface describing his father and uncle traveling to Bolghar where Prince Berke Khan lived . A year later , they went to Ukek and continued to Bukhara . There , an envoy

from the Levant invited them to meet Kublai Khan , who had never met Europeans . In 1266 , they reached the seat of Kublai Khan at Dadu , present day Beijing , China . Kublai received the brothers with hospitality and asked them many questions regarding the European legal and political system . He also inquired about the Pope and Church in Rome . After the brothers answered the questions he tasked them with delivering a letter to the Pope , requesting 100 Christians acquainted with the Seven Arts ( grammar , rhetoric , logic , geometry , arithmetic , music and astronomy ) . Kublai Khan requested that an envoy bring him back oil of the lamp in Jerusalem . The long sede vacante between the death of Pope Clement IV in 1268 and the election of his successor delayed the Polos in fulfilling Kublai 's request . They followed the suggestion of Theobald Visconti , then papal legate for the realm of Egypt , and returned to Venice in 1269 or 1270 to await the nomination of the new Pope , which allowed Marco to see his father for the first time , at the age of fifteen or sixteen .

In 1271 , Niccolò , Maffeo and Marco Polo embarked on their voyage to fulfill Kublai 's request . They sailed to Acre , and then rode on camels to the Persian port of Hormuz . The Polos wanted to sail straight into China , but the ships there were not seaworthy , so they continued overland through the Silk Road , until reaching Kublai 's summer palace in Shangdu , near present @-@ day Zhangjiakou . In one instance during their trip , the Polos joined a caravan of travelling merchants whom they crossed paths with . Unfortunately , the party was soon attacked by bandits , who used the cover of a sandstorm to ambush them . The Polos managed to fight and escape through a nearby town , but many members of the caravan were killed or enslaved . Three and a half years after leaving Venice , when Marco was about 21 years old , the Polos were welcomed by Kublai into his palace . The exact date of their arrival is unknown , but scholars estimate it to be between 1271 and 1275 . On reaching the Yuan court , the Polos presented the sacred oil from Jerusalem and the papal letters to their patron .

Marco knew four languages , and the family had accumulated a great deal of knowledge and experience that was useful to Kublai . It is possible that he became a government official ; he wrote about many imperial visits to China 's southern and eastern provinces , the far south and Burma . His travels also brought him farther to the Bay of Bengal , where he possibly met and gave one of the earliest accounts of the hostile North Sentinelese tribe . Highly respected and sought after in the Mongolian court , Kublai Khan decided to decline the Polos ' requests to leave China . They became worried about returning home safely , believing that if Kublai died , his enemies might turn against them because of their close involvement with the ruler . In 1292 , Kublai 's great @-@ nephew , then ruler of Persia , sent representatives to China in search of a potential wife , and they asked the Polos to accompany them , so they were permitted to return to Persia with the wedding party ? which left that same year from Zaitun in southern China on a fleet of 14 junks . The party sailed to the port of Singapore , travelled north to Sumatra , sailed west to the Point Pedro port of Jaffna under Savakanmaindan and to Pandyan of Tamilakkam . Eventually Polo crossed the Arabian Sea to Hormuz . The two @-@ year voyage was a perilous one ? of the six hundred people ( not including the crew ) in the convoy only eighteen had survived ( including all three Polos ) . The Polos left the wedding party after reaching Hormuz and travelled overland to the port of Trebizond on the Black Sea , the present day Trabzon .

= = = Debate = = =

Skeptics have wondered if Marco Polo actually went to China or if he perhaps wrote his book based on hearsay . While Polo describes paper money and the burning of coal , he fails to mention the Great Wall of China , Chinese characters , chopsticks , or footbinding . In The Book of Marvels , Polo claimed that he was a close friend and advisor to Kublai Khan and that he was the governor of the city of Yangzhou for three years ? yet no Chinese source mentions him as either a friend of the Emperor or as the governor of Yangzhou ? indeed no Chinese source mentions Polo at all . Likewise , Polo claimed to have provided the Mongols with technical advice on building mangonels during the Siege of Xiangyang , a claim that cannot possibly be true as the siege was over before Polo had arrived in China . The Mongol army that besieged Xiangyang had several Chinese military engineers attached to it who would have known how to build catapults the equal of anything to be

found in Europe . Polo 's leading latter @-@ day critic , Dr. Frances Wood in her 1995 book *Did Marco Polo Go to China ?* has argued that at best Polo never went further east than Persia ( modern Iran ) and that there is nothing in *The Book of Marvels* about China that could not be obtained via reading Persian books . Wood maintains that it is more probable that Polo only went to Constantinople ( modern Istanbul , Turkey ) and some of the Italian merchant colonies around the Black Sea , picking hearsay from those travelers who had been further east .

Supporters of the book 's basic accuracy have replied . Responses to skeptics have stated that if the purpose of Polo 's tales was to impress others with tales of his high esteem for an advanced civilization , then it is possible that Polo shrewdly would omit those details that would cause his listeners to scoff at the Chinese with a sense of European superiority ; Marco lived among the Mongol elite ; foot binding was rare even among Chinese during Polo 's time and almost unknown among the Mongols ; the Great Walls were built to keep out northern invaders , whereas the ruling dynasty during Marco Polo 's visit were those very northern invaders ; researchers note that the Great Wall familiar to us today is a Ming structure built some two centuries after Marco Polo 's travels ; and that the Mongol rulers whom Polo served controlled territories both north and south of today 's wall , and would have no reasons to maintain any fortifications that may have remained there from the earlier dynasties . Other Europeans who traveled to Khanbaliq during the Yuan Dynasty , such as Giovanni de ' Marignolli and Odoric of Pordenone , said nothing about the wall either .

The British historian David Morgan argued that Polo and / or his ghost @-@ writer Rustichello da Pisa certainly exaggerated and lied about his status in China , making him the friend of Kublai Khan , the governor of Yangzhou and helping the Mongols take Xiangyang , but these falsehoods do not prove that Polo never went to China . Morgan argued that it is possible that Polo served in the Imperial Salt Monopoly in Yangzhou , but he was never the governor of Yangzhou as a European ruling an important and wealthy city like Yangzhou would have been a sufficient novelty in 13th century China to merit a mention in the Chinese records , and there is none . In defense of Polo , Morgan noted that the voyage of the princess from China to Persia to marry the ?l @-@ kh?n is confirmed by a 15th @-@ century Chinese encyclopedia and by the Persian historian Rashid @-@ al @-@ Din Hamadani in the *Jami ' al @-@ tawarikh @-@* through neither mentions Polo or indeed any European as part of the bridal party . Morgan argued that Polo as a mere Venetian merchant would not had been considered an important person in the Mongol Empire , so his omission is not surprising , especially if one considers that the bridal entourage numbered in the hundreds . Moreover , Rashid @-@ al @-@ Din had a strong dislike of " Franks " ( in the medieval Middle East , Muslims called Western Europe " Frankstan " and all Western Europeans were " Franks " ) , having almost nothing positive to say about them in the *Jami ' al @-@ tawarikh* , and so he may have omitted that " Franks " were given the honor of being members of the bridal party . Morgan maintained that since this marriage between a member of the Yuan dynasty of China and their cousins , the ?l @-@ kh?ns of Persia was known only in Asia that the only way that a European like Polo would had known of it would have been if he been in Asia . Morgan wrote that since much of what *The Book of Marvels* has to say about China is " demonstrably correct " that to claim that Polo did not go to China " creates far more problems than it solves " and so that the " balance of probabilities " strongly suggests that Polo really did go to China , even if he exaggerated somewhat his importance in China .

The British scholar Ronald Latham has pointed out that *The Book of Marvels* was in fact a collaboration written in 1298 ? 1299 between Polo and a professional writer of romances , Rustichello of Pisa . Rustichello 's intention was to use today 's language , to write a best @-@ seller , and as such he preferred to stress the fantastic , bizarre and the romantic at the expense of accuracy . Latham has argued that today it is difficult to tell precisely just how much of *The Book of Marvels* was Polo and how much Rustichello . However , it is firmly established that the book was written in the same " leisurely , conversational style " that characterized Rustichello 's other books , which would very strongly suggest that *The Book of Marvels* was written by Rustichello with Polo just merely reminiscing about his travels to him . Likewise , the opening introduction in *The Book of Marvels* to " emperors and kings , dukes and marquises " was lifted straight out of an Arthurian

romance Rustichello had written several years earlier , and many of the episodes in The Book of Marvels were taken out of the same Arthurian romance to be reset in China . For an example , in his Arthurian romance , Rustichello described the first arrival of Sir Tristan at the court of King Arthur at Camelot ; the first meeting described between Polo and Kublai Khan at the latter 's court is almost the same right down to the same words used in the Arthurian romance with only Polo inserted in place of Sir Tristan and Kublai Khan in place of King Arthur , and a few other adjustments . In the same way , much of the account of the Siege of Xiangyang is a reworked version of an epic siege by King Arthur described in Rustichello 's Arthurian romance . Latham wrote that many of the fantastic aspects in The Book of Marvels were added in by Rusticello who was giving what medieval European readers expected to find in a travel book . As such , the fantastic and bizarre accounts of people with heads of dogs or faces in their chests ? which were staples of medieval travel literature ? were almost certainly the work of Rustichello . In the same way , Rustichello may have dropped references to ordinary life in China that were presumably of little interest to a European audience . Latham wrote :

" There are other features of the book that are as likely to be due to Rustichello as to Marco , such as the tendency to glamorize the status of the Polos at the Tartar court , particularly their relation to the princess entrusted to their care , the vein of facetiousness that often accompanies references to their sexual customs and the eagerness to acclaim every exotic novelty as a ' marvel ' . It is likely that without the aid of Rustichello Marco would never have written a best @-@ seller . Conceivably he might have produced something not much more readable than Pegolotti 's Handbook . More probably he would never have written a book at all "

Latham noted that there are references to daily life , culture , geography and history of China and the Far East in general that would have been unknown to someone like Rusticello , and that could only have come from Polo . As far as it can be established , Rusticello had never been further east than the Holy Land , which he visited as a pilgrim ; as such , Rusticello would have known something of the Near East , and the rest of Asia would have been unknown to him . The University of Tübingen Sinologist and historian Hans Ulrich Vogel argued that Polo 's description of paper money and salt production supported his presence in China because he included details which he could not have otherwise known . Economic historian Mark Elvin , in his preface to Vogel 's 2013 monograph , concludes that Vogel " demonstrates by specific example after specific example the ultimately overwhelming probability of the broad authenticity " of Polo 's account . Many problems were caused by the oral transmission of the original text and the proliferation of significantly different hand @-@ copied manuscripts . For instance , did Polo exert " political authority " ( signora ) in Yangzhou or merely " sojourn " ( sejourna ) there . Elvin concludes that " those who doubted , although mistaken , were not always being casual or foolish , " but " the case as a whole had now been closed " : the book is , " in essence , authentic , and , when used with care , in broad terms to be trusted as a serious though obviously not always final , witness . "

= = Legacy = =

= = = Further exploration = = =

Other lesser @-@ known European explorers had already travelled to China , such as Giovanni da Pian del Carpine , but Polo 's book meant that his journey was the first to be widely known . Christopher Columbus was inspired enough by Polo 's description of the Far East to want to visit those lands for himself ; a copy of the book was among his belongings , with handwritten annotations . Bento de Góis , inspired by Polo 's writings of a Christian kingdom in the east , travelled 4 @, @ 000 miles ( 6 @, @ 400 km ) in three years across Central Asia . He never found the kingdom but ended his travels at the Great Wall of China in 1605 , proving that Cathay was what Matteo Ricci ( 1552 ? 1610 ) called " China " .

= = = Cartography = = =

Marco Polo 's travels may have had some influence on the development of European cartography , ultimately leading to the European voyages of exploration a century later . The 1453 Fra Mauro map was said by Giovanni Battista Ramusio ( disputed by historian / cartographer Piero Falchetta , in whose work the quote appears ) to have been partially based on the one brought from Cathay by Marco Polo :

That fine illuminated world map on parchment , which can still be seen in a large cabinet alongside the choir of their monastery ( the Camaldolese monastery of San Michele di Murano ) was by one of the brothers of the monastery , who took great delight in the study of cosmography , diligently drawn and copied from a most beautiful and very old nautical map and a world map that had been brought from Cathay by the most honourable Messer Marco Polo and his father .

Though Marco Polo never produced a map that illustrated his journey , his family drew several maps to the Far East based on the wayward 's accounts . These collection of maps were signed by Polo 's three daughters : Fantina , Bellela and Moreta . Not only did it contain maps of his journey , but also sea routes to Japan , Siberia ? s Kamchatka Peninsula , the Bering Strait and even to the coastlines of Alaska , centuries before the rediscovery of Americas by Europeans .

= = = Commemoration = = =

The Marco Polo sheep , a subspecies of *Ovis ammon* , is named after the explorer , who described it during his crossing of Pamir ( ancient Mount Imeon ) in 1271 .

In 1851 , a three @-@ masted Clipper built in Saint John , New Brunswick also took his name ; the Marco Polo was the first ship to sail around the world in under six months .

The airport in Venice is named Venice Marco Polo Airport .

The frequent flyer program of Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific is known as the " Marco Polo Club " .

= = = Arts , entertainment , and media = = =

= = = = Games = = = =

The game " Marco Polo " is a form of tag played in a swimming pool or on land , with slightly modified rules .

Polo appears as a Great Explorer in the strategy video game Civilization Revolution ( 2008 ) .

= = = = Literature = = = =

The travels of Marco Polo are fictionalised in a number works , such as :

Brian Oswald Donn @-@ Byrne 's Messer Marco Polo ( 1921 )

Italo Calvino 's novel Invisible Cities ( 1972 ) , in which Polo appears as a pivotal character .

Gary Jennings ' novel The Journeyer ( 1984 )

James Rollins ' SIGMA Force Book 4 : The Judas Strain ( 2007 ) , in which facts about Polo 's travels and conjecture about secrets he kept are interleaved with modern @-@ day action .

= = = = Television = = = =

The television miniseries , Marco Polo ( 1982 ) , featuring Ken Marshall and Ruocheng Ying , and directed by Giuliano Montaldo , depicts Polo 's travels , won two Emmy Awards , and was nominated for six more .

The television film , Marco Polo ( 2007 ) , starring Brian Dennehy as Kublai Khan , and Ian Somerhalder as Marco , portrays Marco Polo being left alone in China while his uncle and father return to Venice , to be reunited with him many years later .

In the Footsteps of Marco Polo ( 2009 ) is a PBS documentary about two friends ( Denis Belliveau and Francis O 'Donnell ) who conceived of the ultimate road trip to retrace Marco Polo 's journey from Venice to China via land and sea .

Marco Polo is a television drama series about Marco Polo 's early years in the court of Kublai Khan which premiered on Netflix in December 2014 .