

Timeline: Marco Polo's Journey

The Life of Marco Polo

1254 Marco Polo, the son of Niccolo Polo, is born in Venice.

1259



Niccolò and Maffeo Polo leaving Constantinople for the east, in 1259.

Niccolò and Maffeo Polo leave Constantinople and transfer their trading business to Soldaia, a city in Crimea controlled by the Mongol empire. Searching for better profits, the Polos move east to Bukhara (in modern-day Uzbekistan) where they trade for three years.

1264

The Polo brothers join an embassy sent by Hulagu Khan, ruler of the Ilkhanate empire in present-day Iran, Iraq and most of the former Soviet republics, to his brother Kublai Khan, ruler of the Mongol Empire in present-day Mongolia, North China and much of Western China.



The Polos in Bukhara, meeting with the representative of Hulagu Khan.

1266



Kublai Khan.

The Polo brothers arrive at the court of Kublai Khan in Dadu (present-day Beijing) China. Kublai Khan sends the Polos back to Venice with a letter to the Pope, requesting 100 educated missionaries to teach Christianity and Western customs to his people, and oil from the lamp in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (the reputed resting place of Jesus Christ). The letter also includes a golden tablet that authorizes the Polos to receive food and lodging throughout Kublai Khan's domain.

1269-

1270

The Polo brothers return to Venice and await the nomination of a new Pope.

1271

The Polo brothers present Kublai Khan's letter to newly-elected Pope Gregory X, and set out to Mongolia with seventeen-year-old Marco Polo, two Dominican monks and the oil from the lamp. The monks do not finish the voyage out of fear. The Polos are also carrying letters for the Mongol emperor from the Pope.



Niccolo and Maffeo Polo present a letter from Kubilai to Pope Gregory X in 1271.

1274



The Polo family arrives in a Chinese city.

The Polos give the Pope's gifts to Kublai Khan. The Polos spend the next seventeen years in China. Kublai Khan takes a liking to young Marco Polo, and dispatches him on diplomatic missions throughout the empire. Marco later claims that Kublai Khan made him the governor of the city of Yangzhou for three years.

**1291-
1294**

Kublai Khan sends the Polos to escort a Mongol princess to her betrothed in the Ilkhanate in Persia. The Polos travel by sea from the Chinese port city of Quanzhou to Sumatra, Sri Lanka, India and finally to Persia.



Marco Polo dressed in Tartar costume.

1295 The Polos return to Venice and tell their stories of the East to doubting Venetians.

1298

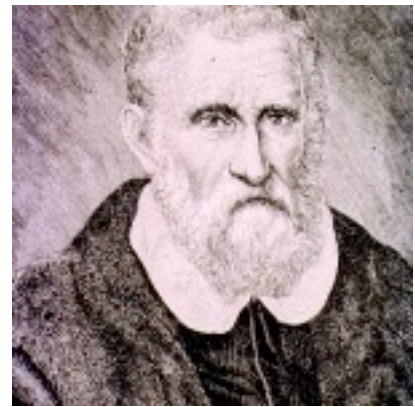


A page from a manuscript of *Il Milione*.

Marco Polo is captured during a civil war between Venice and Genoa. During his imprisonment, he dictates a detailed account of his travels to a fellow prisoner. The resulting book (known alternately as “*Il Milione*,” “*The Description of the World*” or “*The Travels of Marco Polo*”) becomes a huge success in Europe, 200 years before the invention of the printing press.

**1299-
1300**

Marco Polo is released from prison, marries, and has three children. He never leaves Venice again.



Portrait of Marco Polo

**1310-
1320**

Marco Polo writes a new version of *Il Milione* in Italian.

1324

Marco Polo dies at home age 70.