



Marco Polo's China: A Venetian in the Realm of Khubilai Khan (Routledge Studies in the Early History of Asia)

Stephen G. Haw

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Marco Polo's famous book about his journey to China, written in 1298, continues to be a subject of considerable controversy. One recent work on the subject argues that Marco Polo never went to China at all, and other scholars have pointed out apparent mistakes and important omissions in Marco's writings, including his failure to mention the Great Wall, and his apparently erroneous description of the course of the Yellow River.

Haw re-examines Marco Polo's writings. The main arguments against his credibility have been negative, concentrating on things that it is argued he should have seen and noted but did not. The most serious of these supposed omissions are generally said to be his failure to describe the Chinese writing system, tea, foot-binding and the Great Wall of China. Yet Haw argues that what he does mention is impressive and argues strongly for his veracity. This book clarifies Marco Polo's itineraries in China and proposes several new identifications of places mentioned.

Relying extensively on original Chinese sources and supplemented by Haw's wide knowledge of China, *Marco Polo's China* presents a convincing argument and concludes that his work is an accurate, important and useful source from an extraordinary period of Chinese history.

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