

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ DE MENDOZA**

**HISTORY OF  
THE KINGDOM  
OF CHINA**

**VOL. 1&2**

**Juan González de Mendoza**

# **History of the Kingdom of China**

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# INTRODUCTION.

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In presenting to the members of the Hakluyt Society a reprint of the cotemporary English translation by Parke of Mendoza's interesting and now rare account of China, the editor thinks it due to his readers that some explanation should be given of the circumstances under which the original work was compiled, and that at the same time it should be shown what previous accounts had reached Europe respecting that remarkable country. The interest of the narrative itself, abounding as it does with minute and curious details of the manners and customs of so peculiar a race as the Chinese, requires no vindication: it will speak for itself. It will nevertheless interest those who appreciate the objects of the Society, to know, that the present translation was made at Hakluyt's own suggestion, shortly after the appearance of Mendoza's original work in Spanish.

It is the leading purpose of the Hakluyt Society to deal with the Archæology of Geography, and more especially so in connexion with the progress made by our own English ancestors in the advancement of that important science. In pursuance of that object, therefore, Mendoza's account of China has been selected for re-publication, as being the earliest *detailed* account of that country ever published in the English language. We say *detailed* account, because we must not omit to mention that it was preceded by a short but interesting document, published by Richard Eden in his *History of Travayle in the West and East Indies*, entitled

"Reportes of the Province of China," of the history and contents of which we shall hereafter speak in its proper place. While, however, in the selection for re-publication, respect is paid to the earliest narratives which appeared in our own tongue, the reader's appreciation of the subject is best secured by an introductory notice of all the antecedent descriptions which may at intervals have appeared in other languages. This plan is more especially desirable with respect to those earlier glimmerings of information which Europe obtained respecting a country so removed from the civilized world, by its geographical position and ethnological peculiarities, as China, yet so marvellously in advance of it at the times of which we speak, both in its intellectual and moral developments. In such notice, meanwhile, we propose to pass by all discussion as to the much disputed question of the position of the *Thinæ* of Eratosthenes, Strabo, and the *Periplus* of the Erythræan Sea, or of the application of Marinus's *Serica*, as preserved to us by Ptolemy, to the kingdom of China. Upon these more uncertain data we shall dwell no longer than to state, that our own impression agrees with that of Vossius, that China is the country referred to, and that the *Seres* of Ammianus Marcellinus, corresponding as they so closely do in character with the modern Chinese, were intended to represent that people. That the Romans possessed some knowledge of China, would seem to be shown by a discovery made by the learned De Guignes, of a statement in a Chinese historical work, that in the year of our Lord 166, an embassy, said to have come by sea, arrived from An-thon (*Antoninus*) to the Emperor Yan-hi; and the use of the "*serica vestis*", alluded to



by Horace and Propertius, would appear to confirm the impression, provided only that silk, and not muslin, were the commodity really alluded to.

On these less certain points, however, we are, as we have said, unwilling to dwell. We pass on therefore to the mention of more explicit and unquestionable record. First of these is the narrative given in an Arabic manuscript, written about the year 1173, describing the observations of two Arab merchants, who, from the style of the documents, were evidently in China a couple of centuries earlier. Their respective dates, indeed, are concluded to be 851 and 867. This curious and valuable manuscript, discovered by the learned M. Eusèbe Renaudot in the Comte de Seignelay's library, was translated by him into French, and published at Paris in 1718. A translation appeared in English in 1733. Although thus concealed from the acquaintance of Europeans till this comparatively recent date, it rightly takes its place here as comprising the two earliest accounts of China, of which we have as yet received any information. Though adulterated with some few exaggerations, and statements manifestly fabulous, they contain so many curious particulars, which even now, from the permanence of institutions and manners in China, may be considered as accurate, that no doubt can be entertained of their genuineness, or of the intelligence of the narrators.

The two narratives were written consecutively, one of them forming a sort of comment or supplement to the other.

The country is described as extensive, but, though more populous, less extensive than the Indies, and divided into many principalities. It is represented as fruitful, and

containing no deserts, while India is said to contain some of great extent.

Tea, under the name of *tcha*, is distinctly referred to, as being universally drunk infused in hot water, and supposed to be a cure for every disease.

Porcelain is spoken of as an excellent kind of earth, of which is made a ware as fine and transparent as glass.

The Chinese are described as more handsome than the Indians, and are

"dressed in silk both winter and summer; and this kind of dress is common to the prince, the soldier, and to every other person, though of the lowest degree. In winter they wear drawers, of a particular make, which fall down to their feet. Of these they put on two, three, four, five, or more, if they can, one over another; and are very careful to be covered quite down to their feet, because of the damps, which are very great and much dreaded by them. In summer they only wear a single garment of silk, or some such dress, but have no turbans.

"Their common food is rice, which they often eat with a broth, like what the Arabs make of meat or fish, which they pour upon their rice. Their kings eat wheaten bread, and all sorts of animals, not excepting swine, and some others.

"They have several sort of fruits, apples, lemons, quinces, sugar-canes, citruls, figs, grapes, cucumbers of two sorts, trees which bear meal, walnuts, filberts, pistachios, plums, apricocks, services [cherries], and

coco-nuts; but they have no store of palms; they have only a few about some private houses.

"Their drink is a kind of wine made of rice; they have no other wine in the country, nor is there any brought to them; they know not what it is, nor do they drink of it. They have vinegar also, and a kind of comfit like what the Arabs call Natef, and some others.

"They are not very nice in point of cleanliness. They eat also of dead animals, and practice in many other things like the Magians; and, in truth, the religion of the one and the other is much the same. The Chinese women appear uncovered, and adorn their heads with small ivory and other combs, of which they shall wear sometimes a score together. The men are covered with caps of a particular make. They are very expert mechanics, but ignorant of the arts that depend on the mathematics."

The knowledge of reading and writing is described as being general amongst them, all important transactions being put into writing. Idolatry is mentioned as very prevalent, and a hideous and incomprehensible statement is made, of human flesh being publicly exposed for sale in the markets. At the same time the punishment of vice is represented as most severe, and the surveillance over individuals extremely rigid, "for everybody in China, whether a native, an Arab, or any other foreigner, is obliged to declare all he knows of himself, nor can he possibly be excused for so doing". And thieves are put to death as soon as caught.

Canfu (Canton) is mentioned as the seaport of China, resorted to by Arabian shipping; and Cumdan, described as a very splendid city, supposed to be Nanking, was the residence of the monarch.

Renaudot, to whom the world is indebted for rescuing this narrative from obscurity, believes that it supplied Edrisi, the celebrated Arab geographer of the twelfth century, with the materials for the observations on China which occur in his *Geographia Nubiensis*; but this reproach would seem to be unfounded, inasmuch as his details are too few and vague, to warrant the conclusion that they were digested from the more lucid and ample account to which we have been referring. The most observable point of information with which Edrisi supplies us, is the fact, that the northern parts of *Sin* had by that time been conquered by a Tartar nation, whom he calls the Baghargar Turks. Abulfeda also, who flourished nearly two centuries later, seems to have been equally ignorant of the existence of the two Arab travellers; for he gives, as an apology for the ignorance of the geographers of that day respecting China, that no one had been there from whom they could procure information.

The incidental reference to China by Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveller in the east, of the twelfth century, should not be omitted. It is but a reference, but curious enough to be quoted. It is as follows:—

"From thence (the Island of Khandy) the passage to China is effected in forty days; this country lies eastward, and some say that the star Orion predominates in the sea which bounds it, and which is

called Sea of Nikpha. Sometimes so violent a storm rages in this sea, that no mariner can reach his vessel; and whenever the storm throws a ship into this sea, it is impossible to govern it; the crew and the passengers consume their provisions, and then die miserably. Many vessels have been lost in this way, but people have learned how to save themselves from this fate by the following contrivance. They take bullocks' hides along with them, and whenever this storm arises and throws them into the Sea of Nikpha, they sew themselves up in the hides, taking care to have a knife in their hand, and being secured against the sea-water, they throw themselves into the ocean; here they are soon perceived by a large eagle, called griffin, which takes them for cattle, darts down, takes them in his gripe, and carries them upon dry land, where he deposits his burthen on a hill or in a dale, there to consume his prey. The man, however, now avails himself of his knife, therewith to kill the bird, creeps forth from the hide, and tries to reach an inhabited country. Many people have been saved by this stratagem."

The first European reference to China described by a traveller from *hearsay*, is that given by the Minorite friar John de Plano Carpini, who, with five other brothers of the order, in 1245 was sent by Pope Innocent IV into the country of the Mongolians. The purpose of this mission was, if possible, to divert these devastating conquerors from Europe, and to instigate them rather to a war with the Turks and Saracens. At the same time they were to inculcate, as

much as might be, the Christian faith, and at all events to collect every possible information respecting a people so little known.

Carpini was absent sixteen months. A copy of his narrative, formerly belonging to Lord Lumley, is in the British Museum, and is the same which was used by Hakluyt for his *Principal Navigations*, from which the following extract is taken. It is after describing a battle between the Mongals and the Chinese, whom he calls Kythayans, that he describes the latter as follows:

"The men of Kytay are Pagans, hauing a speciall kinde of writing by themselues, and (as it is reported) the Scriptures of the Olde and Newe Testament. They haue also recorded in hystories the liues of their forefathers: and they haue Eremites, and certaine houses made after the manner of our churches, which in those dayes they greatly resorted vnto. They say that they haue diuers saints also, and they worship one God. They adore and reuerence CHRIST IESVS our Lord, and beleue the article of eternall life, but are not baptized. They doe also honorably esteeme and reuerence our Scriptures. They loue Christians, and bestowe much almes, and are a very courteous and gentle people. They haue no beardes, and they agree partly with the Mongals in the disposition of their countenance. In all occupations which men practise, there are not better artificers in the whole worlde. Their countrey is exceeding rich in corne, wine, golde, silke, and other commodities."

The first traveller, from whom accounts collected from personal experience respecting China were received in *Europe*, was William Van Ruysbroeck, commonly known by the name of De Rubruquis, a friar of the Minorite order, and sometimes called William of Tripoli, from the circumstance of the narrative of his travels having been transmitted from Tripoli to St. Louis, king of France, at whose instance they were undertaken. The cause of his mission was a rumour, which had spread through Europe, that the Mongolian chief, Mangu Khan, had embraced the Christian religion; and St. Louis being then engaged in the fourth Crusade against the Saracens, was anxious to cement an alliance with the Tartars, who were at that time in hostility with the same power on the side of Persia. This political purpose was enhanced by sanguine hopes that the Tartars were even then, or likely soon to be, converted to the Christian faith. The passage of Rubruquis was by Constantinople over the Black Sea, through the Crimea, to the district of the city of the Caraci, in the Gobi Desert, where Mangu Khan was then residing.

His first reception was not of the most hospitable kind, but nine days after his arrival he succeeded in obtaining an imperial audience; and when Mangu Khan, a short time after, departed for Karakorum, a city on the east side of the river Orchon, he and his companions followed in his train. This city, of which no traces have been found in the desert for some centuries, is mentioned by Marco Polo, who visited it about eighteen years after Rubruquis, as having been the first in which these Tartars ever fixed their residence, and was at that time the capital of Mangu Khan, and the only

considerable city in that part of Asia. Rubruquis, in describing it, says: "There are two grand streets in it, one of the Saracens, where the friars are kept and many merchants resort thither, and one other street of the Catayans (Chinese), who are all artificers." The explanation of this is, that the Tartars had already conquered the greater part of northern China, then known under the name of Cathay.

Rubruquis and his companions, who by this time had gained considerable favour in the eyes of the Khan, entered Karakorum with great distinction. He describes the city itself as not equal to the village of St. Denis, near Paris, the monastery of which he asserts was "tenne times more worth than the palace, and more too." The place was surrounded by a mud wall, and had four gates. The description of the palace conveys the idea of a hall, at one end of which was a raised seat for the Khan, on which he "sitteth above like a god". In this city the friar found to his surprise a French goldsmith, named Guillaume Bouchier, who is not unfrequently mentioned by early writers under the name of William of Paris, and who had constructed a piece of mechanism, the ingenuity of which deserves the highest praise, when the early period at which he worked is taken into consideration. Its description is thus given by Purchas, in a translation of the greater part of the travels of Rubruquis, inserted in the third volume of his *Pilgrimes*.

"Master *William Parisiensis* made him (the Khan) a great silver tree, at the root whereof were foure silver lions, having one pipe sending forth pure cowes milke, and the foure pipes were convayed within the tree,



unto the top thereof: whose tops spread backe again downward: and upon every one of them was a golden serpent, whose tayles twine about the bodie of the tree. And one of those pipes runs with wine, another with caracosmos, that is, clarified whay; another with ball, that is, drinke made of honey; another with drinke made of rice, called *teracina*. And every drinke hath his vessell prepared of silver, at the foot of the tree, to receive it. Betweene those foure pipes in the top, he made an angell holding a trumpet; and under the tree, he made an hollow vault, wherein a man might be hid; and a pipe ascendeth through the heart of the tree unto the angell. He first made bellowes, but they gave not wind enough. Without the palace there is a chamber, wherein the drinkes are layd, and there are servants readie there to poure it out, when they heare the angell sounding the trumpet. And the boughes of the tree are of silver, and the leaves and peares. When therefore they want drinke, the master butler cryeth to the angell that he sound the trumpet. Then he hearing (who is hid in the vault) blowes the pipe strongly, which goeth to the angell. And the angell sets his trumpet to his mouth, and the trumpet soundeth very shrill. Then the servants hearing, which are in the chamber, every of them poure forth their drink into their proper pipe, and the pipes poure it forth from above, and they are received below in vessels prepared for that purpose. Then the butlers draw them, and carry them through the palace to men and women."<sup>[1]</sup>

Amongst the various points of information gathered by Rubruquis respecting the Chinese or Catayans, as they were so long called, occur the following important items. The characteristic principle of their religious and political creed, embodied the great truth of the existence of one supreme presiding deity, under whom the grand khan maintained the presidency over his extensive dominions, and resistance to that dominion consequently involved not only treason but heinous impiety. Another curious fact, first communicated by Rubruquis, and afterwards confirmed by Marco Polo, is that of paper currency, which was not adopted in Europe for some centuries after, being then in general use in China. To him also we are indebted for some notion of the peculiar characters and mode of writing practised by the Chinese, who, as he says, do not write with pens as we do, but with small brushes, such as are used by our painters, and in one character or figure give a whole word.

He also speaks at length of a strong drink called Cosmos, which he describes as follows:—

"Their drinke, called Cosmos, which is mare's milk, is prepared after this manner. They fasten a long line unto two posts, standing firmly in the ground, and unto the same line they tye the young foales of those mares which they meane to milke. Then come the dammes to stand by their foales, gently suffering themselves to be milked. And if any of them be too unruly, then one takes her foale and puts it under her, letting it sucke a while, and presently carrying it away againe, there comes another man to milke the said

mare. And having gotten a good quantitie of this milke together (being as sweet as coves milke) while it is new, they powre it into a great bladder or bag, and they beat the said bag with a piece of wood made for the purpose, having a club at the lower end like a mans head, which is hollow within: and soone as they beat upon it, it begins to boyle like new wine, and to be sowre and sharpe of taste, and they beat it in that manner till butter come thereof. Then taste they thereof, and being indifferently sharpe they drinke it; for it biteth a mans tongue like the wine of raspes when it is drunke. After a man hath taken a draught thereof, it leaveth behind it a taste like the taste of almond-milke, and goeth downe very pleasantly, intoxicating weake braynes. Likewise Karacosmos, that is to say, blacke Kosmos, for great lords to drinke, they make on this manner. First, they beat the said milke so long till the thickest part thereof descend right downe to the bottome like the lees of white wine; and that which is thinne and pure remaineth above, being like unto whay or white must. The said lees and dregs being very white, are given to servants, and will cause them to sleepe exceedingly. That which is thinne and cleere their masters drinke, and in very deede it is maruellous sweet and wholesome liquor."<sup>[2]</sup>

This limited stock of information, however, valuable as it is from the priority of its date, sinks into insignificance before the detailed and almost coterminous narrative of that once reviled but now much honoured pioneer of

geographical investigation, Marco Polo. In the present advanced age, when enlarged facilities have opened up to the knowledge of the world the characteristic peculiarities of remote countries and their inhabitants, we can do justice to the courage and fidelity of those who, six centuries ago, could dare to describe such apparent anomalies, while at the same time we can find an excuse for the disbelief of those who regarded them as extravagant and impudent fictions. Nor can we, indeed, conceive of any country and people, the description of which, unconfirmed by the repeated observation of many, was more calculated to excite suspicion and disbelief, while those very peculiarities, now that they are authenticated, become the staple proof of the trustworthiness of the early narrator. The father and uncle of Marco Polo, natives of Venice, had in 1254 made a trading journey to Tartary; the exploration of the east, and the importation of its rich and beautiful productions, offering a peculiar attraction to the commercial enterprise of that great and flourishing city. Marco was not born till some months after the departure of his father, but by the time of the return of the two brothers was become a young man, fifteen years having been devoted to their interesting and extraordinary peregrinations. They had crossed the Euxine Sea to Armenia, whence they travelled by land to the court of a great Tartarian chief named Barba. By him they were favorably received, and were enabled to effect advantageous sales of their merchandise. After a year, however, spent in his capital, a war broke out between him and a neighbouring chieftain, and the return of the travellers to Europe being thus intercepted, they took a

circuitous course round the head of the Caspian, and so through the desert of Karak to Bokhara.

After an abode there of three years, during which they obtained a knowledge of the Tartar language, they attached themselves to the company of an ambassador going to the court of Kublai, grand Khan of the Tartars, where they arrived after a year's journey. This potent monarch gave them a gracious reception, and was curious in his enquiries concerning the affairs of Europe and the Christian religion. Learning from them that the Pope was the person regarded with the greatest veneration in Europe, he resolved on despatching them as his ambassadors to His Holiness, with the request that he would send persons to instruct his people in the true faith. Protected by his signet they set out, and pursuing their journey across Asia, arrived in Venice in the year 1269. At this time there was a vacancy in the popedom, and the brothers remained in Venice two years before it was filled. At length, on the accession of Gregory X, they obtained letters from him, accompanied with presents to Kublai Khan, and taking with them young Marco, now seventeen years of age, and accompanied by two friars of the order of Preachers, they again departed for the east. They landed at a port in Armenia named Giuzza (Ayas), but finding that the Sultan of Babylon was at war with the province, the two friars became intimidated and returned home. The three Venetians, however, pursued their way, and after travelling for three years and a half across Asia, and encountering numerous perils and disasters, at length reached the court of Kublai. He was greatly pleased at their return, and Marco, becoming a great favourite with him, was

employed by the Khan in various important missions to distant provinces. After a residence of seventeen years at the court of Kublai, the three Venetians were extremely desirous of returning to their native land, and at length obtained permission to accompany the ambassadors of a king of India, who had come to demand a princess of the Khan's family in marriage for their sovereign. It was a voyage of a year and a half through the Indian seas before they arrived at the court of this king, named Argon. Thence they travelled to Constantinople, and finally reached Venice in 1295.

Such is the narrative of the travels and foreign residence of the three Polos, as related by Marco. They returned rich in jewels and valuable effects, after an absence of twenty-four years, which had so altered them, that nothing less than a display of their wealth was necessary to procure their recognition by their kindred. Hence, Marco gained the name of Il Millione, the house in which he had lived in Venice being still known in the time of Ramusio under the name of "*La Corte del Millioni.*" Not long afterwards, news came to Venice that the Genoese were approaching with a powerful armament, and a number of galleys were immediately fitted out to oppose them, and Marco Polo was made *sopracomito* of one of them. In an engagement that ensued he fell into the hands of the Genoese Admiral Lampa Doria, and was carried prisoner to Genoa, to which circumstance we owe the advantage of possessing a permanent record of his travels. Then he spent four years in prison; but the interest excited amongst the Genoese nobles by the stirring narrative of his adventures, led them to urge him to allow

an account of his travels to be drawn up from his notes and dictation. His narrative was thus taken from his mouth in his prison at Genoa, by the hand of his friend and fellow-traveller Rustichello, a native of Pisa. He afterwards regained his liberty, but of his subsequent history little or nothing is known.

The most interesting portion of his narrative is unquestionably that which refers to China, of which he speaks under the names of Kataia and Manji; the former, as we have already stated, denoting the northern, and the latter the southern part of the empire. The northern kingdom of Kataia contained the residence of Kublai Khan, while the south, although subjugated, had not been completely incorporated into the almost boundless Tartar dominion, which had been established by Kublai's victorious ancestor, the renowned Zenghis Khan.

The route by which Polo entered China was along the northern frontier, and is thus referred to by Mr. Marsden:—"Having reached the borders of Northern China, and spoken of two places (Succuir, the modern Sucheu, and Kampion, the modern Kancheu) that are within what is named the Great Wall, our author ceases to pursue a direct route, and proceeds to the account of places lying to the north and south, some of them in the vicinity and others in distant parts of Tartary, according to the information he had acquired of them on various occasions. Nor does he in the sequel furnish any distinct idea of the line he took upon entering China, in company with his father and uncle, on their journey to the emperor's court, although there is reason to believe that he went from Kan-cheu to Sining, and

there fell into the great road from Thibet to Peking." Before reaching the latter city, however, they visited Karakorum, already referred to as the capital of the Khan's dominions visited by Rubruquis. This city, Mr. Marsden says, was built by Oktar Khan, the son and successor of Jenghis Khan, about the year 1235, whose nephew Mangu Khan, made it his principal residence. No traces of it have been in existence for some centuries, but its position is noted in the Jesuits' and Danville's maps. J. Reinhold Forster, however, on the authority of Fischer's *History of Siberia*, observes, that it must be looked for on the east side of the river Orchon, and not on the Onghin or Onguimuren, where D'Anville has placed it.

From the length of time which had elapsed since Nicolo and Maffeo Polo had left China as Kublai's ambassadors, they were forgotten, but as soon as the Khan, who was then absent, heard of their arrival at Karakorum, he issued orders that they should be received with all honour and escorted to his presence. The appearance of young Marco produced a highly favourable impression upon the Khan, who immediately took him under his especial protection. The assiduity of Marco in studying the language and manners of the Tartars, and the wisdom and prudence which he exhibited in the exercise of the various important functions in which he was employed by the Khan, caused him rapidly to rise in the estimation and favour of that liberal-minded monarch. Upon the removal of the Khan to Khambalu, a corruption of Khambalig (capital of the Khan), and understood to be the modern Peking, Marco followed in his train. This city was found to surpass in splendour everything



that he had yet met with. The dimensions of the palace comprehended a square, each side of which was six miles long, a statement not very widely different from the truth. This enclosure, however, comprised all the royal armouries, as well as fields and meadows, stored with various descriptions of game. The roofs of the spacious halls were covered with gorgeous gilding, and painting in brilliant colours, while representations of dragons and battles were carved upon the sides. To the north of the palace stood an eminence called the Green Mountain, of about a mile in circuit, covered with the finest trees which could be collected from all parts of the empire, and which had been brought by elephants to this spot.

This account strikingly agrees with those of modern travellers, and the description of the internal government of the country, its postal arrangements, and the beneficent distribution of grain from the imperial granaries in times of scarcity, agree with since recognized Chinese history.

Marco subsequently made an excursion into the country of Manji, or Southern China, his route lying by the course of the imperial canal. In his southward progress, after passing by various cities, he at length reached Tinqu (Taitcheou), distant about three days' journey from the sea, where there is an extensive manufactory of salt, an article which forms a leading article of commerce in China. He next came to Yanqui (Yangtcheoufou), at the mouth of the river Yang-tsi-kiang, the seat of a viceroy, in which Polo himself exercised for the space of three years the supreme jurisdiction. His subsequent route lay along the banks of the Yang-tsi-kiang, and he incidentally alludes to the noble city of Nanghin

(Nanking), where he speaks of the manufacture of cloths of gold and silver, but does not seem to have visited the city itself. Taking thence a southward course, he reached Quinsai (Hang-cheou), or the city of heaven, the splendour of which still important place was at that time such, that he speaks of it in the following terms: "In the world there is not the like, nor a place in which there are found so many pleasures, that a man would imagine himself in paradise." This city, then the metropolis of Manji, was in the height of its glory, and may well be supposed to have surpassed in grandeur any city which Polo had seen; and if he is to be charged with exaggeration in describing it as one hundred miles in circumference, and to have contained one million six hundred thousand houses, and twelve thousand bridges, it must be remembered that its really immense extent was calculated to mislead the judgment of an observer, and to make him credulous of the accounts of the inhabitants. It is still a splendid and very extensive city, and it is not to be wondered at that Polo, who witnessed its unfaded glories, should have dwelt with enthusiasm on its spacious and beautiful palaces, and its waters covered with richly decorated barges. The character of the inhabitants he describes as effeminate, luxurious, and unwarlike.

In his southward journey Polo mentions many great cities in Manji, which it would be difficult to identify with their modern nomenclature. Among these Unguen, a city of the province of Fokien, is referred to, as remarkable for its extensive manufacture of sugar, sent from thence to Khambalu; its natives being described as skilled in the art of refining it with wood ashes, from persons belonging to

Babylonia (Egypt). It is also worthy of notice, that his embarkation took place at a famous port called Zaitun, which was much frequented by ships with rich cargoes from India for the supply of Manji and Kataia, and exceedingly productive in revenue to the grand Khan, who received ten per cent. on all merchandise. In spite of this impost, and the heavy freights, amounting to nearly fifty per cent., the merchants are described as making enormous profits.

The inhabitants of the place are represented as distinguished for their skill in embroidery and tapestry. This has been supposed to mean Fou-cheou-fu, Amoy, or some neighbouring port in Fokien; but it is difficult to reconcile this with the statement that one arm of the river on which this city stood reached to Quinsay, which, as we have already stated, appears to be intended for the great city of Hang-cheou.

The next in rotation on our list of eastern travellers, is Giovanni di Monte Corvino, a Franciscan monk of Calabria, who went as ambassador from Pope Nicholas IV in 1288 to the grand Khan, and died in Khambalu, that is, Pekin, holding the distinguished position of archbishop of the missions in that city. His letters refer to little more than the progress he made in the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion in that capital.

The next traveller in China of whom we have to speak is Oderico Mattheussi, a Minorite friar, more commonly known under the name of Oderico de Pordenone, from Pordenone in Friuli, in which place he was born about the year 1285. He undertook a journey in 1317, accompanied by several other monks, through Tartary, by Trebizond, to China, and

returned by Thibet to Europe. In 1330, a year before his death, he dictated in Padua, to Guglielmo di Solagno, a monk, an account of his travels as they occurred to his memory, in the Italian language. An English translation is given by Hakluyt in his second volume, from which we quote the following extracts.

"Travelling more eastward, I came vnto a city named Fuco, which conteineth 20 miles in circuit, wherein be exceeding great and faire cocks, and al their hens are as white as the very snow, having wol in stead of feathers, like vnto sheep. It is a most stately and beautiful city, and standeth vpon the sea. Then I went 18 daies iourney on further, and passed by many prouinces and cities, and in the way I went ouer a certain great mountaine, vpon y<sup>e</sup> one side whereof I beheld al liuing creatures to be as black as a cole, and the men and women on that side differed somewhat in maner of liuing fro' others: howbeit, on the other side of the said hil euery liuing thing was snow-white, and the inhabitants in their maner of liuing were altogether vnlike vnto others. There, all married women cary, in token that they haue husbands, a great trunke of horne vpon their heads. From thence I traueiled 18 dayes journey further, and came vnto a certaine great riuer, and entered also into a city, whereunto belongeth a mighty bridge to passe the said river. And mine hoste with whom I soiourned, being desirous to shew me some sport, said vnto me: 'Sir, if you will see any fish taken, goe

with me.' Then he led me vnto the foresaid bridge, carying in his armes with him certaine diue-doppers or water-foules, bound vnto a company of poles, and about every one of their necks he tied a thread, least they should eat the fish as fast as they tooke them: and he caried 3 great baskets with him also: then loosed he the diue-doppers from the poles, which presently went into the water, and within lesse then the space of one houre, caught as many fishes as filled 3 baskets: which being full, mine hoste vntyed the threads from about their neckes, and entering a second time into the river they fed themselues with fish, and being satisfied they returned and suffered themselues to be bound vnto the saide poles as they were before. And when I did eate of those fishes, methought they were exceeding good.

"Trauailing thence many dayes iourneys, at length I arriued at another city called Canasia [Quinsay, or Hang-cheou], which signifieth in our language the city of heaven. Neuer in all my life did I see so great a citie; for it continueth in circuit an hundreth miles: neither saw I any plot thereof, which was not thoroughly inhabited: yea, I sawe many houses of tenne or twelue stories high, one above another. It hath mightie large suburbs, containing more people then the citie it selfe. Also it hath twelue principall gates: and about the distance of eight miles, in the high way vnto every one of the saide gates, standeth a city as big by estimation as Venice and Padua. The foresaid city of Canasia is situated in waters and

marshes, which alwayes stand still, neither ebbing nor flowing: howbeit it hath a defence for the winde like vnto Venice. In this citie there are mo then 10,002 bridges, many whereof I remembered and passed over them: and vpon euery of those bridges stand certaine watchmen of the citie, keeping continuall watch and ward about the said city, for the great Can the emperour of Catay.

"The number of his owne followers, of his wives attendants, and of the traine of his first begotten sonne and heire apparent, would seeme incredible vnto any man, vnlesse hee had seene it with his owne eyes. The foresayd great Can hath deuided his empire into twelue partes or prouinces, and one of the sayd prouinces hath two thousand great cities within the precincts thereof. Whereupon his empire is of that length and breadth, that vnto whatsoever part thereof he intendeth his iourney, he hath space enough for six moneths continual progresse, except his islands, which are at the least 5,000.

"The foresayd emperor (to the end that traualers may haue all things necessary throughout his whole empire) hath caused certaine innes to be prouided in sundry places upon the high wayes, where all things pertaining vnto victuals are in a continuall readinesse. And when any alteration or newes happens in any part of his empire, if he chance to be farre absent from that part, his ambassadors vpon horses or dromedaries ride post vnto him; and when themselues and their beasts are weary, they blow their horne; at