

great maritime nations of Italy—the Venetians and Genoese—by his descriptions of the inexhaustible treasures of Eastern Asia. He is acquainted with the “silver walls and golden towers” of Quinsay, the present Hangtscheufu, although he does not mention the name of this great commercial mart, which twenty-five years later acquired such celebrity from Marco Polo, the greatest traveler of any age.\* Truth and naïve error are singularly intermixed in the Journal of Rubruquis, which has been preserved to us by Roger Bacon. Near Khatai, which is bounded by the Eastern Sea, he describes a happy land, “where, on their arrival from other countries, all men and women cease to grow old.”†

More credulous than the monk of Brabant, and therefore, perhaps, far more generally read, was the English knight Sir

Tana (Asof), Caffa, and the Erdil (the Volga), Alani and Gothic tribes speaking German. (Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, vol. ii., p. 92 b. and 98 a.) Roger Bacon merely terms Rubruquis frater Willielmus, quem dominus Rex Franciæ misit ad Tartaros.

\* The great and admirable work of Marco Polo (*Il Milione di Messer Marco Polo*), as we possess it in the correct edition of Count Baldelli, is inappropriately termed the narrative of “*Travels*.” It is, for the most part, a descriptive, one might say, a statistical work, in which it is difficult to distinguish what the traveler had seen himself, and what he had learned from others, and what he derived from topographical descriptions, in which the Chinese literature is so rich, and which might be accessible to him through his Persian interpreter. The striking similarity presented by the narratives of the travels of Hiuan-thsung, the Buddhistic pilgrim of the seventh century, to that which Marco Polo found in 1277 (respecting the Pamir-Highland), early attracted my whole attention. Jacquet, who was unhappily too early removed by a premature death from the investigation of Asiatic languages, and who, like Klapproth and myself, was long occupied with the work of the great Venetian traveler, wrote to me as follows shortly before his decease: “I am as much struck as yourself by the composition of the *Milione*. It is undoubtedly founded on the direct and personal observation of the traveler, but he probably also made use of documents either officially or privately communicated to him. Many things appear to have been borrowed from Chinese and Mongolian works, although it is difficult to determine their precise influence on the composition of the *Milione*, owing to the successive translations from which Polo took his extracts. While our modern travelers are only too well pleased to occupy their readers with their personal adventures, Marco Polo takes pains to blend his own observations with the official data communicated to him, of which, as governor of the city of Yangui, he was able to have a large number.” (See my *Asie Centrale*, t. ii., p. 395.) The compiling method of the celebrated traveler likewise explains the possibility of his being able to dictate his book at Genoa in 1295 to his fellow-prisoner and friend, Messer Rustigiolo of Pisa, as if the documents had been lying before him. (Compare Marsden, *Travels of Marco Polo*, p. xxxiii.)

† Purchas, *Pilgrims*, Part iii., ch. 28 and 56 (p. 23 and 34).