

Sonderdruck aus

*To Natasha with love
from Greg
12. III*

Zentralasiatische Studien

des Seminars für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft
Zentralasiens der Universität Bonn

Herausgegeben von
Walther Heissig,
Gregor Verhufen und Michael Weiers

27 (1997)

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

MARCO POLO WENT TO CHINA*

The book under review is the latest attempt to question Marco Polo's credibility in claiming to have spent seventeen years in Mongol-ruled China, and been personally acquainted with events and matters pertaining to that country, which are reported at length in his *Description of the World* (hereafter *DW*).

Dr. Frances Wood's thesis is expounded in fifteen chapters, at the end of which she writes: 'I incline to the view that Marco Polo himself probably never travelled much further than the family's trading post on the Black Sea and in Constantinople' (p. 150).

This rather tentative conclusion comes as somewhat of an anticlimax to the reader who, after so many chapters and such displays of knowledge (and after the expectations aroused by the publicity surrounding the book) might have anticipated a more incisive finale such as: 'Marco Polo was a fraud. All the evidence points to the sad, but inescapable conclusion that the Venetian traveller never went to Central Asia and China, nor to South and Southeast Asia as he claims'. After all, if he did not go beyond 40° or 45° longitude east, he did not visit 'the East' at all, let alone China. This is no idle remark, for by not having travelled farther than the Caucasus and present-day Turkey, Marco Polo should have obtained *all* the information in the book – and there is a lot of it – about Iraq, Persia, Central Asia, Mongolia, continental Southeast Asia, Java, Sumatra, Malacca, the Nicobar Islands, Ceylon, Southern India and the coasts and islands of the Indian Sea, from secondary sources, as he should have done about China also. The sheer fact of having been able to gather so much varied and detailed intelligence about most of thirteenth-century Asia without actually going there is, in my view, an even greater feat than that of compiling a genuine eyewitness account of the magnitude of the *DW*. But is this what happened, and can we credit F.W. with having convincingly made the case for Marco Polo as an 'armchair traveller'?

* This is a review article of: *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* by Frances Wood, London: Secker and Warburg, 1995. Pp. i-x + 182, 1 map. I am very grateful to my friend Prof. H. Franke, Gauting, and to Prof. B. Wehr, Mainz, for supplying valuable information and references. I am solely responsible, however, for the views expressed in this article.

In the Introduction, F. W. describes the genesis of her book, pointing out that 'a very serious challenge to Marco Polo's popular status has been raised by the most eminent of the German Mongolists ... These serious doubts have not, however, had any effect on Marco Polo's popular position, and the legend is repeated endlessly' (p. 2). A little further on, she writes: 'Legend has it that he is responsible for the introduction of noodles to Italy, or spaghetti to China, depending on where you stand, and he has also been credited with the inspiration for Italian ice-cream'.

Now, whereas the story of Marco Polo's involvement in the transfer of noodles and ice-cream from the east is certainly legend – he makes no claim on either count, and we know for sure that he played no part in the noodle migration – the same cannot be said, in the same breath as it were, for his journey to the East which earned him his 'popular position'. F. W. invokes as her authority for demythologising Marco Polo 'the most eminent of German Mongolists', i. e. Emeritus Professor Herbert Franke of Munich. Since Franke's name appears several times in the book, ostensibly in support of F. W.'s thesis, it is appropriate to quote in full what he actually wrote in the source in question (p. 153, Introduction, n. 2): 'There is another passage in a Chinese text which should be mentioned briefly because it concerns the first Europeans who came to China in the Middle Ages. This was some years before the Polos reached China which was in 1265 or 1266 *if* we are to believe that they ever were in China at all – a question which is not yet settled. It has been suggested that in Polo's description of China there are some unsupported boasts about his having been governor in Yang-chou and his taking part in the siege of Hsiang-yang as artillery engineer. It is true that the Chinese sources mention foreign engineers who built stone catapults for attacking the city but their names are Arab and they came from Baghdad. No Po-lo mentioned in the *Yüan-shih* or other sources can be identified with the Italian Polos – all the Po-lo's of the sources have had a good *Altaic* name, Bolod („steel”), because they were of Mongol or Turkish extraction. And there are also a few glaring blanks in Polo's otherwise very detailed account. He never mentions tea, but this may be because he did not like tea or the Mongols in China never offered him any. He never mentions the peculiarity of the Chinese script, and Chinese script is something that would strike even the most casual observer as something different from any other script in Asia or Europe. Even William Rubruk, who had never been in China but only in Mongolia, gives an entirely correct description of the Chinese writing

system. All this has cast some doubt on the contention that the Polo family spent a long time in China. But however that may be, until definite proof has been adduced that the Polo book is a world description, where the chapters on China are taken from some other, perhaps Persian, source (some expressions he uses are Persian), *we must give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he was there after all.*¹

Prof. Franke goes on to show conclusively that the three Polos (Nicolò, Maffeo and Marco) were not the first Europeans to visit Qubilai's court, for they had been preceded by at least one group of 'Frankish' envoys, whose embassy is recorded in a contemporary Chinese source.²

This was written in 1965. In his subsequent work, Franke takes it for granted that Marco Polo *was* in China and, indeed, praises his work for 'the precision of many detailed informations concerning China' which he refers to as 'astonishing', stating that thanks to Marco Polo 'Europe received for the first time reliable information on the far east'.³ Thus, often repeated arguments against Marco Polo based on certain glaring omissions, on incorrect statements and patently false claims in some of the transmitted texts of the *DW*, are not deemed by Franke to be strong enough in themselves to invalidate Marco Polo's credibility.

For the benefit of the reader unacquainted with the background of the controversy, it should be pointed out that the arguments against Marco Polo have a long history. Leaving aside the generations of incredulous readers (and listeners) from Marco's own time onwards who took the *DW* simply as

1 H. Franke, 'Sino-Western Contacts Under the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6:1966, pp. 53-54. The content of this article was delivered as the Hume Memorial Lecture at Yale University on 5 February 1965. See *ibid.*, p. 49, note. It has been reprinted in H. Franke, *China under Mongol Rule*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1944, No. VII. The emphasis is mine.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

3 H. Franke and R. Trauzettel, *Das Chinesische Kaiserreich, Fischer Weltgeschichte*, Band 19, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg: Fischer Bücherei, 1968, p. 236 (my translation). In the 1969 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 13, p. 502, s.v. 'Kublai Khan'), Franke wrote: 'An account of the splendour of his [i. e., Kublai's – I. R.] court and entertainments, of his palaces and hunting expeditions and of his postal services is given by Marco Polo (*q. v.*) through whom Europe received for the first time *reliable information on the far east*' (my emphasis). Cf. also the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 1974, p. 346a, s.v. 'China, History of'; and the references to Marco Polo in *China under Mongol Rule*, especially No. VII, p. 71.

a book of *merveilles*,⁴ most of the specific issues hotly debated today had already been raised early last century. Sir Henry Yule, the learned editor and commentator of the *DW*, noted already in 1866 that 'the editors of the *Histoire Générale des Voyages* ... express doubts whether Polo ever was really in China or Tartary, because he says nothing of the Great Wall, of tea, of the compressed feet of ladies, etc'.⁵ Yule was referring to comments made by G. Baldelli-Boni and Sir William Marsden forty years before. And he also noted that the German medievalist Karl Dietrich Ullmann claimed in 1829 that Marco Polo never went beyond 'Great Bucharìa' (= Bolgary near Kuibyshev, south of Kazan'), i. e. *not further than 50° longitude east*, thus reaching a conclusion remarkably close to that of F.W. over 150 years before her.⁶ *Nihil sub sole novum!*

From then on, doubts and reservations have been expressed from time to time for the obvious reason that the questions that had been asked by the sceptics had not been properly answered. In 1961, a few years before Franke's article rekindled the controversy, another German scholar (whose contribution has also apparently escaped F. W.'s attention) stated that there

4 A typical attitude is that expressed by the Florentine Amelio Bonaguai, the copyist of the TA⁵ MS. in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence, in 1392: 'Qui finisce il libro di messere marcho polo da vinegia il quale scrissi io ... per passare tempo e malinconia come che mi paiano cose incredibili e paionomi il suo dire non bugie anzi più che miracoli. E bene potrebbe essere vero quello di che ragiona ma io non lo credo ...' See Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, prima edizione integrale a cura di Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1928, p. lxxxiv. For further references to contemporary attitudes towards Marco Polo and his book, see L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia. An Introduction to His 'Description of the World' Called 'Il Milione'*, tr. by J. A. Scott, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960, p. 124, n. 80.

5 H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither, Being a Collection of Medieval Notices on China*, first issued in 1866 by the Hakluyt Society, London. New Edition, revised by H. Cordier, Vol. I (= Hakluyt Society, Ser. II, Vol. 38, 1915), p. 165, n. 1. See also *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, Translated and Edited, with Notes, by Colonel Sir Henry Yule ..., 3rd edition revised by H. Cordier, London: John Murray, 1903, and New York: Scribner, 1929, I, pp. 292-293, n. 5.

6 See Yule, *The Book*, I, p. 116, note.

is no definite proof that Marco Polo was himself in China, without however elaborating the point.⁷

Franke's re-airing of a number of puzzling questions concerning the *DW*, and his suggestion that Marco Polo may have used an unknown Persian work on China as one of his sources, prompted F. W. to write, in an article which appeared in *The Times* in 1981, that Marco Polo should perhaps not be numbered amongst the early visitors to China.⁸ This generated a certain commotion. The controversy that followed took a sharper turn when Dr. Craig Clunas of the Far Eastern Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum published in 1982 a short article, also in *The Times*, in which he strongly attacked both Marco Polo and his book, reviving the old arguments and adducing some of his own, and referring for authority to Franke's 'Persian Baedeker' theory — an inaccurate reference this, since Franke mentioned only a 'Persian source'.⁹

A few months later, the noted Chinese Yüan historian and leading Polan scholar Yang Chih-chiu replied with an article countering Clunas' arguments point by point.¹⁰

7 H.O.H. Stange, 'Ein Kapitel aus Marco Polo', in H. Franke (ed.), *Studia Sino-Altaica. Festschrift für Erich Haenisch zum 80. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1961, p. 194. Stange made this comment within the context of his discussion on Marco Polo's description of Quelinfu (= Quenlinfu), i. e. Chien-ning fu (Ch. 156). For other examples of doubts raised about Marco Polo's journey to China in modern works, see the references in J. Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1992, p. xi, n. 12.

8 See Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 4, for the reference to her article.

9 C. Clunas, 'The Explorer's Tracks', *The Times* of London of 14 April 1982, Special Report, p. 1. Dr Clunas claims that Franke suggested 'that Polo may have had access to „some sort of Persian 'Baedeker'". There is no such suggestion in Franke's article, see 'Sino-Western Contacts', p. 54 (quoted above). Unfortunately, F. W. has also misquoted Franke by referring in her book (pp. 143, 146, 149) to the so-called 'Persian guidebook(s)'. We shall return to that later.

10 Prof. Yang's reply in 'Huan-ch'iu' (1982:10) was reprinted in Yü Shih-hsiung (ed.), *Ma-k'o Po-lo chieh-shao yü yen-chiu* [*An Introduction to, and investigation of, Marco Polo*], *Shu-mu wen-hsien ch'u-pan-shé*, Peking, 1983, pp. 52-58, as well as in Yang Chih-chiu, *Yüan shih san lun* [*Three Discussions on Yüan History*], Peking, 1985, pp. 127-132, under the title of 'Ma-k'o Po-lo yü Chung-kuo' ['Marco Polo and China']. This is one of six important articles by Yang on the subject of Marco Polo which have been published in the book edited by Yü Shih-hsiung. (For a profile of Yang Chih-chiu, see Matt Forney, 'Defender of the Faith', in the *Far Eastern*

Finally, in 1993, the senior Chinese historian and Yüan specialist Ts'ai Meipiao published an important article in English on Marco Polo, complementing and supplementing Yang's contribution.¹¹

F. W., and no doubt Clunas, were acquainted with Yang's rejoinder and his other fundamental contributions to the problem,¹² but F.W. may have missed Ts'ai's paper as it is not cited in her Bibliography. In any event, a projected collaboration between F.W. and Clunas did not eventuate, and F.W. set out to write the book on her own, as she explains at the end of the Introduction (p. 4).

Her book has attracted, and continues to attract, a good deal of attention from the press and from academic institutions because, for the first time, all the criticisms of Marco Polo and the *DW* have been brought together in a volume which deals also with the historical background, as well as with popular tales associated with Marco Polo. Moreover, in the last decade or so, there has been a renewal of interest in Marco Polo and his journey as a result of the numerous 'Silk Route' projects, exhibitions and publications sponsored by UNESCO and other organizations, and on account of the lavish Italian-Chinese-American joint television production 'Marco Polo', aired in 1982.

What matters to us here is, of course, the originality and validity of F. W.'s contribution: I propose therefore to review her arguments in the light of earlier and contemporary criticism, and of my own research. I shall also deal with some problems of form, and correct a number of mistakes in her book.

Economic Review of 22 August 1996, pp. 44-45). In the present article, following the practice of *The Cambridge History of China*, *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, and virtually all the major Western sinological works on the Yüan (including those of P. Pelliot, L. Olschki, F.W. Cleaves and H. Franke), I use the Wade-Giles romanization of Chinese. For a quick conversion into the *Pinyin* system (and vice versa), please note with regard to the consonants that W.-G. *ch/ch(i) = P. zh/j(i)*, *ch'ch'(i)ch'(ü) = ch'q(i)q(u)*, *hs = x*, *j = r*, *k = g*, *k, p, p' = b, p, t*, *t' = d*, *t, ts, tz = z*, *ts', tz' = c*. For the transcription of Mongolian, I follow the standard system used in N. Poppe, *Grammar of Written Mongolian*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964 (several reprints), except that I substitute *ḡ* for *ḡ* to represent the deep velar stop (a sound articulated further back than the *g* in *gun*).

11 Cai Meibiao, 'Marco Polo in China', *Social Sciences in China* 14, 2: Summer 1993, pp. 171-179.

12 F. W. refers several times to Yang Chih-chiu in her book (pp. 132, 137-9, 147), and the volume edited by Yü Shih-hsiung is cited in her Bibliography (p. 174, where 'Xu' is a misprint for 'Yu'); however, Yang's review is absent from that Bibliography.

The first four chapters of F.W.'s book can be regarded as introductory, dealing as they do with the contents of the Prologue of the *DW* (Ch. 1); medieval trade between Italy and the Far East, and the reason for the journey of Nicolò and Maffeo Polo (Ch. 2); contemporary travellers to the Mongol court and to China, viz. the Franciscan papal envoys and missionaries of the 13th and 14th c. (Ch. 3); and the medieval legends concerning Prester John and his mythical kingdom, Gog and Magog, and the Three Magi in relation to Eastern Christianity (Nestorianism) and other religions, as they are reported in the *DW* (Ch. 4).

What F. W. says on these topics is generally correct: most of the facts have been amply researched in the past and are well established. However, some of her statements and interpretations call for comment.

On p. 7, F. W. says that 'the Mongols had taken north China in 1260'. Actually, north China had been conquered by the Mongols between 1215 and 1234, when they brought to an end the Chin (Jurchen) state and incorporated its territory.¹³

On pp. 14-15, F. W. mentions the presence of Italian merchants in Yang-chou and, in particular, that of the Vilioni family. She refers to the discovery of the inscribed tombstone of Catherine Vilioni (Katerina de Vilionis), dated 1342, but she is apparently not aware that a second tombstone was found at Yang-chou, also with an inscription in Latin. The latter was erected for Catherine's brother Anthony (Antonius de Vilionis), who died in November 1344.¹⁴ The Vilioni family was Venetian, not Genoese, as a somewhat ambiguous statement by F.W. on p. 14 makes it appear.¹⁵ With reference to Marco Polo's supposed claim to have governed the city of Yang-chou for three years, F.W. correctly points out that 'whilst there is absolutely no record of Marco Polo in the Yangzhou gazetteers, there is equally no mention of other resident Italian merchants and their families'.

13 See H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 6: *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 352, 370-372, 405ff.

14 See R.C. Rudolph, 'A Second Fourteenth-Century Italian Tombstone in Yangchou', *Journal of Oriental Studies* 13: 1975, pp. 133-136 (with reproductions of both tombstones).

15 See L. Petech, 'Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol', *Journal asiatique* 250: 1962, p. 557. Cf. 'Testamento di Pietro Vioni', in *Archivio Veneto*, ser. 1, vol. 26 (Venice, 1883), pp. 161-165, cited by Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 135, n. 19.

On p. 16, F. W. writes: 'in the official history of the Mongol era (*Yuan shi*), the first European to be mentioned by name was John of Marignolli, a papal envoy to the Khans between 1330 and 1340'. Not so. John's name – like those of *all* the other missionaries and papal envoys – is nowhere mentioned in the *Yüan shih*, although his 'Frankish' embassy is duly recorded in the imperial annals (*pen-chi*) s. a. 1342.¹⁶

On pp. 19-20, F. W. refers to Marco Polo's description of the first Mongol capital Qaraqorum and his mention of 'a very large castle' outside the city. She writes: 'This reference, considered „obscure” by one commentator,¹⁷ could perhaps be a confusion with or version of an encampment visited by Friar John of Plano Carpini, the temporary „city of tents” erected to honour the appointment of the new Khan in 1246'. This is certainly not the case, since the temporary encampment south of Qaraqorum was set up especially in order to accommodate the great number of participants at the *qurilta(i)*, or general assembly, that elected Güyüg. This 'tent city' would have been dismantled some time after the election. Moreover, the 'very great castle' was just outside the mound-wall of Qaraqorum, whereas, according to John of Pian di Carpine, the tent city was about half-a-day's journey from the city.¹⁸ The relevant passage in the *DW* (Moule-Pelliot ed.) says: 'The city indeed is surrounded with a strong mound, because they have no supply of stones, near to which on the outside is a very large castle, and in that is a most beautiful palace where the ruler of it dwells'.¹⁹ I think that the imposing building to which Marco Polo refers is the imperial residence built by Činggis Qan's successor Ögödei Qagan (r. 1229-41) in 1235-1236. We

16 See Franke, 'Sino-Western Contacts', p. 57.

17 See R. Latham (tr.), *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958 (several reprints; hereafter referred to as Latham), p. 92, n. †.

18 See Giovanni di Pian di Carpine, *Storia dei Mongoli*, a cura di P. Daffinà, C. Leonardi, M.C. Lungarotti, E. Menestò, L. Petech, Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1989, pp. 230, 339, 391, 410. Güyüg's encampment is referred to as the 'Syra Orda', i. e. *Sira ordo*, lit., 'Yellow (= Golden > Imperial) Camp'. Cf. I. de Rachewiltz in *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 64: 1990, pp. 425-426. See also C. Dawson (ed.), *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey, London and New York: Sheer & Ward, 1955, p. 5.

19 A. C. Moule & Paul Pelliot (eds), *Marco Polo. The Description of the World*, I, London: Routledge & Sons, 1938, p. 161. (The abbreviation *DW* refers always to this composite edition.)

know from the Chinese sources that Ho-lin, i. e. Qaraqorum, was walled (*ch'eng*), and that the imperial palace, known in Chinese as the Wan-an kung ('Palace of the Myriad Tranquillities'), was built in the spring of 1235.²⁰ The construction was completed in February-March 1236, and it was followed by other important buildings erected by Chinese and Muslim architects.²¹ The construction of the palace is, therefore, contemporary with that of the wall encircling the city. There is no doubt in my mind that the *magnum palatium* described by William of Rubruck in his *Itinerarium* is the palace originally built by Ögödei.²² This consisted of several buildings or structures, the most important of which was the throne hall. The site of these structures was excavated by the joint Soviet-Mongolian archeological expedition led by S.V. Kiselev in 1948-1949.²³ The excavations revealed the areas occupied by

20 *Yüan shih* [*History of the Yüan*], *Po-na* ed., repr. Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1981, ch. 2, p. 5a. (I cite the original Hung-wu [1370] edition of the *Yüan shih* in preference to the revised and occasionally faulty Chung-hua shu-chü edition of 1976.) Cf. P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 3 vols., Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959-73, I, pp. 165, 167. In a Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1346, Ögödei's palace is referred to simply as his *ordo*. See F.W. Cleaves in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14: 1951, p. 95, n. 110; cf. also *op. cit.* 15: 1952, pp. 25, 27, nn. 31, 79. The Chinese name Wan-an kung was probably given to the palace by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189-1243), who at the time was in charge of Chinese affairs at the Mongol court. On him see I. de Rachewiltz, H.-L. Chan, C.-C. Hsiao and P.W. Geier (eds) with the assistance of M. Wang, *In the Service of the Khan. Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, *Asiatische Forschungen* 121, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993, pp. 136-175. For Qaraqorum under Ögödei, see Ču. Dalai, 'Ögödëi Xaan ba Xarxorom Xot' ['Ögedei Qaan and the City of Qaraqorum'], *Mongolica* (Ulan-Bator) 5(26):1994, pp. 18-23.

21 See *Yüan shih*, *loc. cit.* Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, who witnessed the construction of the palace, wrote a short but elegant piece in classical Chinese on the occasion of 'the setting up of the beams', which is found in his *Collected Works*. See *Chan-jan chü-shih wen-chi* [*The Collected Works of Chan-jan chü-shih (= Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai)*], *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed., ch. 13, pp. 25b-26b.

22 See A. Van Den Wyngaert (ed.), *Sinica Franciscana I: Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, Quaracchi-Firenze: Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1929, p. 276; P. Jackson (tr. and ann.) with D. Morgan, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke (1253-1255)*, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990, pp. 209, 210, nn. 1 and 2. Friar William gives an excellent description of the palace as it was some twenty years after its construction.

23 See S.V. Kiselev (ed.), *Drevnemongol'skie goroda*, Moscow: 'Nauka', 1965, pp. 6-7, 138-167.

the different structures, wooden pillars, a wooden floor of beams and a roof of glazed tiles belonging to the main palace. The palace complex was surrounded by an enclosure which touched the town wall on the western corner. The latter was an earthen mound two metres high with a wattle fence along its top. The main building and the subsidiary structures have been reconstructed from the scanty remains, the detailed description of Friar William, and also 'from the analogy of Chinese and later Mongol buildings'.²⁴ Thus, the reference in the *DW* is no longer 'obscure' and Marco Polo's indication, although very succinct, cannot be faulted. The fact that the description of Qaraqorum in the *DW* is so 'disappointingly brief' is simply due to the fact that Marco almost certainly did not visit that city which was the Mongol capital until 1260, when Qubilai had himself elected emperor in China, thereby transferring his residence to Yen-ching (Chung-tu, Ta-tu, Peking) and Shang-tu (To-lun, Inner Mongolia).²⁵

The question of what Marco Polo actually saw and what he described second-hand is intimately related to that of his itinerary, and this is of course one of the major problems that confront the reader of the *DW*. It is also the main topic of Chapter Five of F. W.'s book, with which the real critique of Marco Polo's credibility begins.

24 E.D. Phillips, *The Mongols*, New York and Washington: F. A. Praeger, 1969, p. 102. Phillips (*op. cit.*, pp. 94-103) sums up the results of the exploration of the site by Kiselev and his team. See also his reproduction of the map of the palace (and its proximity to the city mound) on p. 101.

25 See Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Personally, I exclude it. Had Marco Polo been at Qaraqorum, he would not have dismissed it in such a fashion. He does not say that he was there. The reasons for not going were, in my view, the following: 1) Qaraqorum was no longer the capital and, after 1260, it fell first into the orbit of Qubilai's rival brother Ariq Böke (d. 1264), then into that of his rebel nephew Toq Temür (d. ca. 1279), and ultimately into that of his hostile cousin Qaidu (d. 1301). In between rebellions, the city which consisted largely of tents with a few edifices (such as the palace complex and a few temples) was neglected and fell into disrepair despite occasional economic help from the south; 2) the journey from north China to Qaraqorum (and return) across the Gobi and the grassland of Mongolia would have discouraged the traveller unless he had some compelling reason for undertaking it. The troubled political situation in that region, its remoteness, and the steady decline of Qaraqorum virtually rule out this possibility. For Qaraqorum under Qubilai, see provisionally M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan. His Life and Times*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988, pp. 113-114.

Entitled 'Not an itinerary', this chapter criticizes the *DW* for 1) not providing a clear and coherent itinerary of localities seen by Marco Polo; 2) not providing dates even when the sections (as with the Near East, Central Asia and China) 'are generally arranged in a geographical manner' (p. 30); 3) the unsatisfactory account of the return journey, with a suggestion that the famous story of the Mongol princess taken from China to Persia to marry the Il-Khan Arġun (r. 1284-91), as related by Marco 'was borrowed from another source' (p. 32); and 4) the fact that the *DW* 'contains remarkably few references to the Polo themselves' (p. 32), leaving 'an impersonal tone with a strong flavour of the guidebook' (pp. 36-37). F. W. mentions in this connection several instances of Marco Polo's descriptions of localities, with details of distances, dates and events which are difficult to reconcile with reality. The chapter concludes with the statement that 'much of Marco Polo's account of the East does consist of tons of salt and distances' and that 'even without following a logical itinerary, the book serves more as a merchant's view of the world than that of a creative writer' (pp. 37, 38).

It is certainly true that Marco Polo is no John of Pian di Carpine or William of Rubruck, whose accounts are a faithful, accurate and detailed record of their journeys; and it is also true that he is interested in commercial activities, but this does not make him a Pegolotti either. His book is neither an *Itinerarium à la Rubruck*, nor a *Pratica della Mercatura*. Criticisms like those of F. W. concerning the itinerary of his journeys, dates and lack of them, impersonal style of narration, and inconsistencies and errors in the *DW*, ultimately stem from an incorrect appraisal of the man and the nature of his book. Both these central questions of the Polan *Problematik* have been addressed by Leonardo Olschki and John Critchley, and they have been discussed *in extenso* in their works.²⁶ It is, therefore, surprising that F. W. should have chosen to ignore the results of these scholars' painstaking investigation, and that she should again ask questions that have already been competently and comprehensively dealt with.

Marco Polo may still be something of an enigma (there are, alas, so many blanks in his life), but two things about him are clear: he was not an official envoy sent by a European potentate on a specific mission, with a detailed report to present to his master upon his return; and he was not merely a merchant (in the professional sense of the word), although he came from a line of merchants, had obviously an eye for valuable goods and trade

26 See Olschki, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 97-146; Critchley, pp. 30-76.

opportunities, and may well have engaged in commercial activities during his long sojourn in Asia.²⁷

He has been aptly described as a literate layman with no literary pretensions; a good, in fact a keen observer, but lacking in imagination; an unsophisticated mind unable to draw general conclusions from the facts described.²⁸ Hence the blandness, often dullness of the narrative, only occasionally relieved by some wild statement or tale of marvels — the stock in trade of all medieval travellers. Hence also the abundance of literary clichés and stereotyped characterizations.²⁹ The 'personal' element is virtually disposed of in the Prologue of the *DW*, and on purpose. The main body of the work was to be devoted to *Le divisament dou monde*, not to the Polos' travels and adventures. The description of places and peoples is what matters: outside the Prologue, the Polos' involvement is purely incidental. If the itinerary and chronology of the *DW* lack coherence and precision, and at times are indeed utterly unreliable, it is because the individual episodes that Marco relates are for him far more important than strict adherence to topographical and chronological accuracy. The result is that while the main events described and the names are generally correct, the details are not.³⁰ We must not overlook the fact that it may have not been possible to check many of the details, especially concerning figures (distances, quantities, etc.), after Marco's return to Venice. One must take into account also factors like lapses of memory and blurred recollections concerning things seen, or done, or heard many years before in the course of an eventful life; Marco's obvious biases in the choice of matters to relate given the enormous mass of information on a great variety of subjects which he clearly had at his disposal; an obvious and only too human tendency to exaggerate his role;

27 Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Cf. Critchley, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50. Given the times and circumstances, it seems unrealistic to think that the Polos, as a group, did not engage in some commercial or financial enterprise in China, or during their travels. Nicolò and Maffeo were merchants by profession, and unless otherwise employed in China, they would as a matter of course have continued their professional activity. This is what Ts'ai, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-176, thinks, speculating further that Marco would have joined them in their commercial enterprises. However, it should be pointed out that Marco, although obviously observant of commercial matters, never claims having been himself involved in 'mercatura'.

28 See Olschki, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120. Cf. Critchley, *op. cit.*, p. xi; Latham, p. 18ff.

29 See Critchley, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26, 58, 84ff., 95.

30 See Pelliot's apt remarks in *Notes on Marco Polo*, I, p. 3, also quoted by F. W. (pp. 59-60).

and our total ignorance concerning the 'data base' he used, i. e. personal recollection with or without outside help, travel notes or other records, books, etc.³¹

In her 'Conclusions' (pp. 140-142), F. W. returns to the subject of the lack of a coherent itinerary in the *DW*, and asks herself whether this may not be due to 'the form of the text' as determined by Marco's 'ghost writer' Rustichello of Pisa. We shall discuss the role of Rustichello later in connection with F. W.'s Chapter Six. However, as to coherence, Critchley has already noted that the 'order' set out in the Prologue is actually adhered to 'until the very last chapters ... land out and sea home. India is twice left to its „proper" place. The subordinate organization within this scheme is that of an itinerary; there is little leapfrogging to and fro'.³² It is after the journey is over, i. e. in the section covering the last fourteen pages in Latham's edition of the *DW*, that the 'coherent' itinerary is abandoned.³³ This very last section or certainly part of it, is undoubtedly a later addition.³⁴

F. W.'s implied comparison of Marco Polo with 'the armchair guidebook writer Pegolotti' (see pp. 13, 14, 149) does not stand a close examination. Although Marco's 'mercantile' remarks are frequent, the style, structure and organization of his book are completely different from Pegolotti's work. Olschki has correctly noted that 'in Pegolotti there is no fictional hint of distant treasure, no interest in the nature and civilization of exotic peoples, no description of landscapes, cities, ports or customs – not even any mention of the curious or salacious stories diffused from time immemorial by merchants, together with their goods, as is attested by both Marco and Giovanni Boccaccio'.³⁵ The occasional 'undisciplined' way in which Marco

31 These and other factors are exhaustively discussed by Olschki and Critchley in the works already cited.

32 Critchley, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

33 Latham, pp. 329-343; *DW*, pp. 469-490. As far as China is concerned, it should be noted that an important contribution to the reconstruction of Marco's itinerary, and the dates pertinent to it, which appeared ten years ago has been overlooked by F. W. I refer to Ch'en Te-chih's article 'Ma-k'o Po-lo tsai Chung-kuo ti lü-ch'eng chi ch'i nien-tai' ('Marco Polo in China, The Itineraries and the Dates'), in *Yüan shih chi pei-fang min-tsu shih yen-ch'iu chi-k'an* (*Studies in the History of the Yuan Dynasty and of the Northern Nationalities*) 10: July 1986, pp. 1-9, 47.

34 See Critchley, *op. cit.*, p. 11; B. Wehr, 'A propos de la genèse du „Devisement dou Monde" de Marco Polo', in M. Selig *et al.* (eds), *Le passage à l'écrit des langues romanes*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1993, pp. 306-307.

35 Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

tells his story – examples of which are given by F. W. – is precisely due to the fact that the author lacked the constraints of a diarist, a chronicler or a compiler of a travel or commercial guide.

Finally, the way F. W. handles the story concerning the Polos' return journey and the delivery of Lady Kökečin deserves special attention for 1) it cannot be disposed of so easily, and 2) Marco's account is crucial in determining his presence in China at the time and, consequently, in establishing the credibility of the author and of the book as a whole. Therefore, it is important to look closely at this event to which F. W. returns in Chapter Fifteen (pp. 137-139), only to dismiss it once again as non conclusive.

The story has been quoted often enough, but its real significance has been generally missed, lost (as it is often the case) in technicalities.³⁶

In the Prologue of the *DW*, Marco Polo describes how he, his father and uncle, took leave from Qubilai and 'the good fortune' that led to their departure from China.³⁷ The principal wife of Argun, Il-Khan of Persia (r. 1284-91), had died, and Argun, who was Qubilai's grand-nephew, sent three envoys to Qubilai requesting a spouse from her own tribe to take her place.³⁸ Qubilai obliged and chose as the new bride for Argun the young Lady Cocacin, i. e. Kökečin.³⁹ Argun's envoys tried to return to Persia by land, but because of warfare in Central Asia, the party was forced to retrace its steps

36 See also, recently, Latham, pp. 15-16.

37 *DW*, pp. 87-93 (cf. also *ibid.*, p. 490); Latham, pp. 42-45 (cf. also p. 344).

38 Argun's wife (the widow of his father Abaga, who had died in 1282) was Bulugan Qatun – Marco Polo's 'Queen Bolgana' (*DW*, p. 88) – who died in 1286. She belonged to the Baya'ut tribe. See Pelliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-393.

39 For Kökečin see *ibid.*, pp. 392-394; F. W. Cleaves, 'A Chinese Source on Marco Polo's Departure from China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 36:1976, pp. 202-203. While I agree with Cleaves that the meaning of the name is 'Dark Complexioned' rather than 'Azure (or Céleste)', I do not share his view that it should actually be read Kökejīn. Marco's 'Cogacin' represents an original form Kökečin. The Mongolian ethnic and name suffix *-jin* sometimes becomes *-čin*, as in *uyigurčīn* 'Uighur', *sartağčīn* 'Muslim, Turkestanian', etc. The reading 'Kūkājīn' which is found in Rašīd al-Dīn's work quoted by Cleaves is not reliable, for the Persian historian regularly confuses *č* with *j*. For example, he always writes Tājījūt (the name of a Mongol clan and tribe) instead of Tājīčūt, which is the correct form. See P. Pelliot *et* L. Hambis (ed. and tr.), *Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan. Cheng-wou ts'in-tcheng lou*, I, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951, pp. 13, 25, 151, 253. I think that in 'Cogacin' we have an instance of *Kökejīn > Kökečin.

and arrange to return home by sea. At this juncture the Polos wanted also to go back to Venice after seventeen years spent in China. They met the envoys and decided to join them. Qubilai charged them with a mission to the Pope and the kings of Europe, gave them two tablets of authority to facilitate their journey and – so Marco claims – entrusted the princess to their care. The ships were fitted out and the emissaries, Lady Kökečün and the three Polos embarked for Persia. The voyage was long and arduous: many people died, including two of the three envoys. On arrival at Hormuz, the Polos found that Argun had already died and that his brother Ġaigatu (r. 1291-95) had succeeded him. Ġaigatu decided that the princess should be given as wife to Ġasan (r. 1295-1304), Argun's eldest son. After delivering her to Ġasan, the Polos returned to Ġaigatu and eventually resumed their journey overland. Ġaigatu supplied them with further tablets of authority, and with horses, provisions, etc. for the journey. They reached Trebizond (Trabzon, in Turkey), and thence sailed to Constantinople, Negropont (Khalkis, in Greece) and Venice, where they arrived in 1295.

The story is told with a wealth of details in the *DW*. Regarding the date of the Polos' departure from China, for a long time it was assumed that it took place at the beginning of 1292.⁴⁰ However, in the late 1930s, by ingenious deduction, Paul Pelliot was able to work out on the basis of Marco's account

40 See, e. g., Yule, *op. cit.*, I, p. 23; Latham, p. 15. The year of departure has been usually calculated starting from 1275, the year of the Polos' supposed arrival in China, and adding 17, the years Marco says they spent there. See Yule, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and note. Now, the three Polos met Qubilai at Chemeinfu, i. e. K'ai-p'ing fu, also called Shang-tu ('Upper Capital'; see Pelliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-240, 256-257), as is told in the *DW*, p. 84. In 1275, Qubilai arrived in K'ai-p'ing on 27 March (see *Yüan shih*, ch. 8, p. 20b). The Polos could have easily taken three months to cross north China from west to east, i. e. from Tangut to Chemeinfu, since we do not know how long they halted in the towns along the route described by Marco (*DW*, pp. 158-185) – the land journey from Ayas on the Gulf of Iskenderon (Alexandretta) to K'ai-p'ing having taken altogether *three and half years* (*DW*, p. 84). It is, in fact, more than likely that they still reached northwest China in 1274. If so, and if the Polos left China at the beginning of 1291 (as it will become evident), Marco may be excused for saying 'quite seventeen years' (*loc. cit.*), although this is not strictly accurate, his stay in the country having lasted between sixteen and seventeen years. Marco, as is known, was not very good at figures – another feature of the man that militates against the claim that he was a merchant.

that the Polos must have left China early in 1291.⁴¹ Until 1941, the whole story of Argun and his bride, the princess' voyage and the Polos' return was known to us solely through the *DW*. Not only is there no mention of the Polos in Chinese sources, but the entire episode concerning Qubilai, Kökečün and Argun is totally ignored by them: the *Yüan shih* – the official history of the Yüan dynasty – does not even allude to it in the 'Basic Annals' (*pen-chi*) or anywhere else.

Now, in his account Marco gives the names of the three envoys of Argun as follows: 'the first Oulatai, the second Apusca, and the third Coja' – listed, of course, in order of seniority.⁴² He also informs us that the one who survived the voyage was Coja.⁴³ The transcriptions of the names of the envoys as given by Marco are very accurate. 'Oulatai' corresponds to Mongolian Ulatai ~ Uladai; 'Apusca' to Turkic Abušqa ~ Abišqa; and 'Coja' to Persian Xōja (Turkic Qoča, Qoya).⁴⁴ Ulatai is mentioned again in the *DW* in connection with the part he is supposed to have played in aiding Argun to ascend the throne after Abaga's death.⁴⁵ The Persian sources ignore him. The *Yüan shih* mentions one (or two?) Uladai, one Ulutai and one Uludai – all these being variants of the same name as borne by different

41 Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 393. Pelliot actually followed a method of inverse reasoning which led him to the conclusion 'that the travellers crossed the western Indian Ocean in the winter-monsoon of 1292-1293. Since it took them three months to sail from Zaitun [i. e., the Chinese port of Ch'üan-chou on the Fu-chien coast – I.R.] to Sumatra, where they waited five months before crossing the Indian Ocean, they must have left China not in 1292 as is generally stated, but early in 1291'. Pelliot wrote this note before World War II, but it was published only in 1959.

42 *DW*, p. 88. Cf. Latham, p. 42, where the spelling of the names has been somewhat altered by the editor.

43 *DW*, p. 91; Latham, p. 44.

44 See Pelliot, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 798-799; I, pp. 44 and 402.

45 *DW* p. 464; Latham, p. 325. As noted by Pelliot, *op. cit.*, II, p. 798, Ulatai's role in relation to Argun's enthronement is no doubt exaggerated, since Ulatai is not mentioned at all in Rašid al-Dīn's *Collection of Histories* (*Jāmi' al-Tavāriḫ*, completed in 1310-11).

personages.⁴⁶ None of these can be identified with our Ulatai, who was obviously an official in Argun's service, not in that of Qubilai's.

As for the second envoy Abušqa, we know from the Persian historian Rašīd al-Dīn that there was a high official called Abišqa under Ġasan who was sent on a mission from Persia to Qubilai, but as we lack details it is impossible to say whether this is our Abušqa, and if so whether the mission to Qubilai is the one we are concerned with. There were several officials by this name at the time.⁴⁷

The third envoy, Xōja, has such a common name that it is virtually impossible to identify him with the many homonymous individuals mentioned in the *Yüan shih* and other Chinese sources.⁴⁸

We are extremely fortunate, however, to have the copy of a contemporary official document in Chinese which not only mentions the three envoys, but also indicates that the mission they led was *preparing* to sail from Ch'üan-chou for Persia in September 1290. We owe the discovery of this precious new material to the earlier mentioned Yang Chih-chiu, who found it cited in the famous 15th-century encyclopedia *Yung-lo ta-tien* and who published it in 1941.⁴⁹

46 See Tamura Jitsuzō (ed.), *Genshi goi shūsei* [A Terminological Repertory of the *Yüan shih*], Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Bungaku-bu, 1961-63, I, pp. 163a, 165a, 166a. The 'Uladai' listed on p. 163a with two entries of the *Yüan shih* may, in fact, be two homonymous personages. A Prince Uludai is mentioned also in the *Ching-hsien chi* of Yen Fu (1236-1312). See I. de Rachewiltz and M. Wang, *Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Sources*, Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1988, III, p. 2154. He must be identified with the Uludai of the *Yüan shih* (= Tamura, *op. cit.*, p. 166a). For other personages called Uladai, see *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, translated from the Persian of Rašīd al-Dīn by J.A. Boyle, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 371a (Index). For the name Uladai and its variants, see Cleaves, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-202. Cleaves (*ibid.*, p. 201 and n. 144) says that the form Uladai 'though not attested, must surely have existed'. As a matter of fact, Uladai is well attested in the *Yüan shih* (ch. 11, p. 3a; 12, p. 13b).

47 See Pelliot, *op. cit.*, I, p. 44, also for the name's variant Abišqa (= Abišqa > Abušqa). For other personages called Abišqa, see *The Successors*, p. 349a (Index); Tamura, *op. cit.*, II, p. 1270b, 1271a; de Rachewiltz and Wang, *op. cit.*, I, p. 12.

48 The name Xōja (< Xvājah) is extremely common and appears in various transcriptions in Chinese. As Pelliot (*op. cit.*, p. 402) remarked, 'the name is not characteristic enough to support an attempt at identification'. (The letter *x* is pronounced as *ch* in the Scottish *loch*.)

49 See Cleaves, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-192.

The document in question is a memorial dated 21 September 1290. It refers to an earlier directive issued by Qubilai in April-May 1290 to the effect that the three 'Uludai, Abišqa and Qoje be sent to the domain of the Prince of the Blood Argun by way of Ma'bar'. The new directive contained in the document is to the effect that rations and provisions for the voyage should not be purchased with government moneys for seventy of the 160 'co-travellers' who did not belong to the official mission, but to officials who were responsible for their provisioning.⁵⁰

This is the only text in Chinese that we possess concerning Argun's embassy's return voyage. Neither Lady Kökečin nor the Polos are mentioned, but there can be no doubt, also in view of the dates, that we are dealing with the mission described so vividly by Marco. As we have seen, according to the independent calculations of Pelliot, who was unaware of the discovery and publication of the memorial during the war, the embassy left China a few months later.

By dint of luck, we possess also a text that records the arrival of the embassy in Persia. This is a passage in Rašīd al-Dīn's *Collection of Histories* to which J. A. Boyle drew the attention of the scholarly world in 1970 and which was further elucidated by F. W. Cleaves in 1976.⁵¹

The relevant passage contains a brief account of the arrival in Abhar (near Kazvin) of Xvājah (i. e., Xōja) and a party of envoys who had been sent to the Qa'an (Qubilai), with the bride sought by Argun in the person of Kūkājīn Xātūn (i. e., Lady Kökečin), in the spring or early summer of 1293. Argun's son Ġasan halted at Abhar and took Kökečin as wife for himself.⁵²

Rašīd's brief notice confirms Marco's account in its essentials, including the name of the surviving envoy Xōja, now leading the party.

50 For an annotated literal translation of the document, see *ibid.*, pp. 186-187. As noted by Cleaves (p. 188), 'It could hardly be expected that the government should pay the cost of feeding 70 persons who were passengers only by virtue of the fact that they had either been donated or purchased by officials whose sole interest in putting them on board the ships was probably to enrich themselves by having them bring back goods from Persia to China, which, because of the official character of the mission, could be brought in duty-free and sold at a handsome profit'. By 'Ma'bar' is meant the Coromandel Coast. From the *Yüan shih* we learn that the ships bound for Ma'bar sailed from Ch'üan-chou. See *ibid.*, p. 191.

51 J.A. Boyle, 'Rašīd al-Dīn and the Franks', *Central Asiatic Journal* 14:1970, pp. 62-67; Cleaves, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-203.

52 For the date of the arrival of Ġasan at Abhar, see Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

Let us consider the following points:

1. Marco could have not learned about this mission from either the Chinese or the Persian written sources, as the former do not mention it, and the only Persian source that refers to it was not completed until 1310-11.

2. He must have been well acquainted with the three envoys, whose names appear only in an internal administrative document in Chinese concerning rations and provisions. Had Marco not been personally acquainted with them, it is most unlikely that he would have been able to record their names so accurately, and in the correct sequence, solely from second-hand oral information.

3. Marco says that two of the three envoys died during the voyage and that only the third, Xōja, survived. Rašīd al-Dīn confirms this fact indirectly, by mentioning only Xōja in his account.

4. It is, in fact, thanks to Marco's own account that we can reconcile the partial references in the Chinese and Persian sources and thus complete the picture. At the same time, this is also a test of the veracity of his story: the basic facts and the chronology corroborate each other. Pelliot, on the basis of the partial evidence in his possession, could already write that 'Polo's very detailed account about the sending of the embassy by Argun is to be entirely trusted'.⁵³

Therefore, the possibility that Marco Polo reconstructed the whole episode in Genoa (from memory) or in Venice (from notes) on the basis of second-hand information that he had previously obtained from an unknown informant in the Crimea or in Constantinople is, in my view, so remote as to be safely dismissed.

Prof. Yang rightly regards the entire Kōkečīn episode as the definite proof that Marco was in China.⁵⁴ Anyone who considers the evidence objectively cannot but agree with him. Commenting on the doubts entertained by scholars until recently, Prof. M. Rossabi stated in *The Cambridge History of China* that 'such doubts were laid permanently to rest by Yang Chih-chiu, who in his *Yüan shih san lun* (Peking, 1985), pp. 97-132, produced

53 Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 393. The emphasis is mine.

54 Yang, 'Ma-k'o Po-lo yü Chung-kuo', pp. 53-54.

conclusive proof of Marco Polo's presence in China during Khubilai's reign'.⁵⁵

Having reached this conclusion, we must ask ourselves why are the Polos – ostensibly appointed as official envoys of Qubilai not only to Argun, but also to the Pope and the kings of Europe – not mentioned in the earlier-cited Chinese and Persian sources? The silence of these sources is indeed F. W.'s only argument against Marco's testimony.

There is one answer to this question, viz. that the Polos, although members of the official party, were among the lesser officials accompanying the chief envoys, i. e. *those originally sent by Argun*. The original embassy did not include the Polos, and it was this embassy that was returning home on completion of its mission. The Polos were an adjunct to it. As usual, Marco has exaggerated his role, as well as that of his father and uncle. The tablets of authority that were given to them by Qubilai were for the purpose of carrying out *their* mission to Europe, taking advantage, for part of the journey, of the return embassy to Persia. The fact is confirmed by the additional tablets given to the three travellers by Ġaigatu.⁵⁶ The reason why once back in Venice in 1295 they did not carry out the mission with which they had been entrusted with is no doubt due to several factors, both political and personal – and the news that eventually reached them of the demise in 1294 of their former patron and employer Qubilai.⁵⁷

To conclude these remarks on Marco's disputed itinerary, an interesting parallel can be drawn between the Venetian traveller and the Arab traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304-77), who also claimed to have visited China during the Yüan dynasty. Pelliot, who never questioned the authenticity of Marco Polo's account (see below), rejected Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's itinerary, calling it 'fantastic'.⁵⁸ However, the latter's presence in China was established beyond doubt by a Chinese inscription of 1350 in which are mentioned the names of the leaders of the Muslim community in Ch'üan-chou in the forms recorded

55 H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 463, n. 83. See also F. Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China. Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1992, p. 115.

56 See the *DW*, pp. 90 and 91. We shall have more to say later about these tablets.

57 We do not know when Marco learned of Qubilai's death, and we are in the dark regarding the circumstances that prevented the Polos from carrying out their mission immediately after their return to Venice in 1295. Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 122ff.

58 Pelliot, *op. cit.*, II, p. 813. Cf. R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929, p. 471, n. 2.

by him. Thus, in both cases it was the discovery of a contemporary Chinese text containing irrefutable evidence that vindicated the author's claim.⁵⁹

F. W.'s Chapter Six deals with the thorny problems of the role of Rustichello (Rusticello, Rusticiano) of Pisa's role in editing Polo's work, and of the textual history of the *DW*. F. W. thinks that 'it is probable that Rusticello was largely responsible for the style of the work, which may partly account for the often slightly evasive tone of the narrator' (p. 41).

Without going into a new analysis of the various versions of the *DW* of which F. W. gives a succinct description in this section, I would like to refer the reader to two important, albeit contrasting, views by leading contemporary medievalists which I think should be considered in F. W.'s discussion, viz.:

1. John Critchley's statement to the effect that 'it does not matter too much if Rustichello de Pise was Polo's ghost writer or not. Nor is it significant whether the F text represents a text written by Rustichello with Polo in gaol in Genoa or a translation by Rustichello into French from some other text. His „Arthurian” background had a negligible effect. Until there is good reason to shift the balance of probability to the contrary, the working hypothesis can be that the F text represents the voice, the opinion, and the „personality” of Marco Polo himself.'⁶⁰
2. Barbara Wehr's argument that a) the story of Marco Polo's dictation of the *DW* while in captivity in Genoa is a fiction by Rustichello; b) Rustichello reworked a lost Venetian text written by Marco himself, changing the style and adding new material at the end of the book, and did this having in mind his patron Edward I of England; and c) the existing version of the *DW* more closely reflecting the lost original is the Latin version by Fra Pipino da Bologna.⁶¹

59 See D. D. Leslie, 'The Identification of Chinese Cities in Arabic and Persian Sources', *Papers on Far Eastern History* 26: Sept. 1982, pp. 15-16; Idem, *Islam in Traditional China. A Short History to 1800*, Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986, pp. 45, 81; Idem, 'The Mongol Attitude to Jews in China', *Central Asiatic Journal* 39: 1995, p. 240 and n. 18. For the text of the 1350 inscription which is preserved in the 1507 stele of the Ch'ing-ching Mosque in Ch'üan-chou, see Ch'en Ta-sheng, *Ch'üan-chou I-ssu-lan chiao shih-k'o (Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou [Zaitun])*, Fu-chou: Ning-hsia jen-min ch'u-pan-shê, Fu-chien jen-min ch'u-pan shê, 1984, pp. 9 (Chinese text), 13-16 (English translation).

60 Critchley, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

61 Wehr, *op. cit.*

As indicated by Prof. Wehr, further research on the textual history of the *DW* is necessary to resolve some of these issues, as indeed also the position occupied by Z, i. e. the Toledo manuscript, in the stemma.

Chapter Seven is concerned with two issues: the language of the original manuscript of the *DW* (pp. 49-50), and that of Marco's transcriptions of foreign names and terms (pp. 51-63).

With regard to the former, much has been written already. Unfortunately, in view of the uncertainty that we have just touched upon surrounding the redaction of the book, i. e. Marco's dictation to Rustichello who then wrote the text down in his French *versus* an original version by Marco in Italian (Venetian), subsequently translated into French and Latin by Rustichello and Fra Pipino respectively, no satisfactory conclusion can be reached at this stage.

The second issue, which at first sight appears more complicated than the first (hence its lion's share of F. W.'s chapter) is, in reality, much simpler at the present state of our knowledge. The question of why Marco did not use the Chinese and/or Mongolian forms of geographical and proper names, and of various terms for official titles, objects, etc., but uses instead forms that go back to Persian and Turkic, is because these two languages were the languages commonly used by the 'sundry foreigners' (Chin. *sê-mu jen*) in China. The dominant foreign language, not only a *lingua franca*, but actually the 'official' foreign language until the Ming period, was Persian, and it is clear from Marco's use of Persian forms that this was indeed the language he was most familiar with.⁶² Turkic was also important and widely used in China because of the numerous people of Turkic background active in China at the time, especially Uighurs.⁶³ Mongolian was the language of the rulers

62 See the important article by Huang Shijian, 'The Persian Language in China During the Yuan Dynasty' in *Papers on Far Eastern History* 34: Sept. 1986, pp. 83-95, which gives examples of the official use of Persian by the Mongol authorities.

63 See I. de Rachewiltz, 'Turks in China Under the Mongols: A Preliminary Investigation of Turco-Mongol Relations in the 13th and 14th Centuries', in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals. The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983, pp. 281-310. This article was written before the publication of Prof. Huang's paper on the Persian language, hence my statement on p. 308, n. 76, that Turkic was the *lingua franca* in China at the time. This assertion on my part must now be revised in favour of Persian. On multilinguality in China in the Mongol period, cf. also H. Franke, 'A Note on Multilinguality in China Under the Mongols: The Compilers of

and of the Mongol aristocracy: its use was chiefly confined to the élite, the bureaucrats and the numerous interpreters and translators who were especially trained for the purpose.⁶⁴ Chinese was the language of the subjects – a social and cultural gulf separating them from their Mongol masters. The foreigners of various extractions who had settled in the country in the wake of the Mongol invasion formed a sort of intermediate structure or class between the rulers and their Chinese subjects. Marco, Nicolò and Maffeo Polo belonged to this multiethnic and multicultural society and most, if not all, of their business was transacted in Persian.⁶⁵

As for the many outlandish forms of names and terms that we encounter in the *DW* and which puzzle the reader, they are often due to textual corruption and compounded scribal errors, as shown by Pelliot's meticulous reconstructions.⁶⁶ The original Italian notation of proper names retained in the F text is also not always reliable. Marco was not a linguist; however, of the (literally) hundreds of foreign names and terms recorded in the *DW*, the vast majority can be accurately reconstructed and identified by the philologist and the historian.⁶⁷ Comparatively few of them are still baffling us, and it is from among these few that F. W. has chosen her examples.

In view of the above, F. W.'s statement that 'Polo's use of Persian terms might suggest he could have been working from Persian sources' (p. 62; cf. pp. 143, 146) is no longer pertinent. The fact that a Persian historian like Rašīd al-Dīn and Marco Polo give similar versions of the same story, as in the case of the Aḥmad 'affair' and of Wang Chu's role in it (pp. 57-59), and

the Revised Buddhist Canon 1285-1287', in E.H. Kaplan and D.W. Whisenhunt (eds), *Opuscula Altaica. Essays Presented in Honor of Henry Schwarz*, Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1994, pp. 286-298.

64 See, on this topic, Yao Ts'ung-wu, 'Liao Chin Yüan shih-ch'i t'ung-shih k'ao' ('A Brief Study of Interpreters in the Dynasties of Liao, Kin and Yüan [907-1368]'), *Wen shih ch'ê hsüeh-pao* 16: Oct. 1967, pp. 215-221. Cf. also E. Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China. Local Administration in the Yüan Dynasty*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1989, pp. 84-85, 118-119.

65 Cf. Cai Meibiao, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172 (see n. 11).

66 In his monumental work *Notes on Marco Polo*. F. W. gently pokes fun at Pelliot's painstaking way of explaining seemingly undecipherable names and terms (pp. 55, 57), but in this particular area of investigation his scholarship is as solid as a rock and his contribution unparalleled.

67 For a convenient listing, see the Index of Marco Polo, *La description du monde, texte intégral en français moderne avec introduction et notes par Louis Hambis*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1955, pp. 422-433, as well as Hambis' Notes, *ibid.*, pp. 339-419.

that their accounts are at variance with the Chinese version of the event, is simply due to the information in both cases ultimately deriving from the same sources.⁶⁸ Those were official Mongol sources and the Mongol-oriented, largely Persian-speaking milieu in China, principally in the capital – a milieu that had become increasingly hostile to the Chinese.⁶⁹ The differences in details between Rašīd's version and that of Marco can be explained by the oral nature of the original reports.

Chapter Eight: 'Omissions and inclusions' begins with a misrepresentation. F. W. writes (p. 64): 'Pelliot's complex work on the language raised many doubts as to Marco Polo's accuracy as well as the foundation for his information, but Professor Pelliot, though frequently baffled, always left Marco Polo with the benefit of the doubt. However, the German Mongolist Herbert Franke queried Marco Polo's veracity partly on the grounds of the contents of his book, most notably things that he omitted from his description of China'.

This is not the case. F. W. has confused Pelliot with Franke. There is no question of Pelliot leaving 'Marco Polo with the benefit of the doubt'. Pelliot had no doubts about Marco Polo's veracity;⁷⁰ it is Professor Franke

68 On Aḥmad (?-1282) and Wang Chu (1254-82) see H. Franke in de Rachewiltz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 539-557 (esp. pp. 550-551). For a comparison of the various versions of the story (Rašīd al-Dīn's, Marco Polo's, and the Chinese accounts by Yü Chi and the *Yüan shih*), the following essay is of particular relevance: A.C. Moule, 'The Murder of Acmat Bailo' in *Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo* by the same author, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, pp. 79-88. F. W. may have profited from it when writing the section on pp. 57-59 and her remarks on the subject on pp. 144, 146, 147.

69 See the apt remarks in Cai, *op. cit.*, p. 172. For Qubilai's change of attitude towards the Chinese after Li T'an's rebellion (1262), cf. de Rachewiltz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiii, 516ff., 534ff.

70 The following statement is indicative of the French scholar's attitude towards Marco Polo: 'Quelques noms de trafiquants latins nous ont été transmis par le hasard des textes; tous sont éclipsés par les trois Polo, en particulier par Marco, qui a passé dix-sept ans en Chine (1275-1292) au service de Khoubilai et a laissé de ses expériences un récit si véridique et si vivant' (*La Haute Asie* [Paris, 1931], p. 34). Pelliot wrote the above before finding out the true date of Marco's departure from China (1291); but this is the only change he would have made to his statement. Nowhere in his *Notes on Marco Polo*, or in any of his later works, does he suggest that Marco may have *not* been to China, or that his account gave rise to any serious doubts.

who, as I have already pointed out, gives Marco Polo the benefit of the doubt.⁷¹

After having dealt with some notable inclusions in Marco's book, F. W. turns to the egregious omissions, beginning with the failure to mention the Chinese writing system (p. 70). In actual fact, the Chinese language and writing are touched upon, albeit very briefly, in the Z version where we read: 'But you must know that through the province of Mangi [i. e., south China – I. R.] one speech is preserved and one manner of letters; yet in tongue there is difference by districts, as if, among laymen, between Lombards, Provençals, Frenchmen, etc. ...'⁷² This cannot compare with the short but precise description of the Chinese script found in William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium*.⁷³ Marco is not alone, however, in mentioning the (printed) Chinese paper money, but failing to remark on the script: Ibn Baṭṭūṭa does the same; and Friar Odoric of Pordenone, who noted the Chinese custom of footbinding and mentions paper money, does not comment on the script either. Clearly, the complex Chinese system of writing interested only travellers who were more educated and literary minded, i. e. more intellectual and sophisticated, than either Marco or Odoric.⁷⁴

71 See the quotation from Franke's paper 'Sino-Western Contacts' given at the beginning of the present article, and F. W.'s own correct reference to it on p. 146.

72 *DW*, p. 353; cf. Latham, p. 239.

73 See Van Den Wyngaert, *op. cit.*, p. 271; Jackson, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, p. 203.

74 On p. 75, F. W. writes, 'He [i. e., Marco Polo – I. R.] may, equally, have so lacked interest in Chinese culture or been so narrowly European in outlook that the writing system, for example, was of no interest to him, though it is claimed in his Prologue that he mastered Mongol at least and spoke directly to Qubilai Khan'. F. W. is correct with regard to Marco's lack of interest in Chinese literary culture; however, I see no connection between this now well established fact and his claim to have mastered Mongolian, which is a totally different language and script from Chinese. In the *DW*, pp. 85-86 (Latham, p. 40), Marco says that he 'learnt the customs and uses of the Tartars and their language and their letters', and that 'he knows several languages and four other different letters and writings so that he could read and write in any of those languages very well'. There have been speculations as to what these languages may have been (see, e. g., Yule, *The Book*, I, p. 28ff.): Persian was almost certainly one of them, while Chinese was definitely not. It is even doubtful whether Marco really knew Mongolian, for the little evidence we have points to the negative. See Cai, *op. cit.*, p. 172. Marco no doubt made use of interpreters when dealing with Chinese and, in all likelihood, Mongols too; but he may have had some practical knowledge of

Throughout his narrative Marco shows little interest for the higher achievements of the mind or for literary pursuits, and Chinese writing would have been simply beyond him.⁷⁵ Moreover, as others have pointed out, Marco saw China through the rulers' eyes.⁷⁶ His lack of interest for the Chinese ideograms may be compared to the ancient Romans' basic lack of curiosity for the script of their Egyptian subjects, notwithstanding the fact that Rome was covered with obelisks and monuments inscribed with beautiful hieroglyphs, and that Italy was in close touch with Egypt for four centuries.⁷⁷

I believe that this explanation applies also to printing and other notable omissions. Interestingly enough, Marco, Odoric and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa – all three of them – describe the Chinese paper money (Chin. *ch'ao*), which was printed with texts in both Chinese and in Mongolian 'Phags-pa script, but say nothing about the writing on them. Only Marco hints at the printing process involved in the production of banknotes when he says that the sheets of paper were impressed with the official seal 'so that the pattern of the seal dipped in cinnabar remains printed there, and then the money is authorized'.⁷⁸ It is a pity that he did not push his investigation further and

Turkic. In any event, his linguistic claims are obviously exaggerated.

75 Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139, cited also by F. W., p. 69.

76 See, e. g., P. Demiéville's pointed remarks on Polo's vision of China through the 'Mongol screen' in his excellent paper 'La situation religieuse en Chine au temps de Marco Polo', in *Oriente Poliano. Studi e conferenze tenute all'Is. M. E. O. in occasione del VII centenario della nascita di Marco Polo (1254-1954)*, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1957, p. 223ff. Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 141; Reichert, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

77 The ancient Greeks were not much better in this regard. Herodotus, who describes at length many aspects of Egyptian culture, disposes of the Egyptian writing in a few words by simply stating that it is of two sorts, one sacred and the other common (*The Histories*, II, 36). In the case of the Romans, we know that hieroglyphs were actually still used in Hadrian's time (A.D. 130), for this emperor had the text in honour of his favourite Antinous translated into Egyptian and inscribed on the obelisk which is now on the Pincio. However, there is not even the briefest of descriptions of the Egyptian script in the whole Latin literature.

78 *DW*, pp. 238-239; Latham, pp. 147-148. For Odoric and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa on Yüan paper money, see Van Den Wyngaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 482; Yule, *Cathay*, II, pp. 196-198, 240; H.A.R. Gibb (tr. & ann.), *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325-1354*, IV, completed with annotations by C. F. Beckingham, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1994, pp. 890-891. In Yule, *The Book*, I, facing p. 426, there is a good colour reproduction of a

extend it to books, but the reason seems clear. Since (as Marco informs us) the paper notes were printed by impressing an engraved seal on them, the books that he saw in China, made of the same paper and containing the same type of writing, must have been fashioned in the same way, viz. by using a printing seal on each page (which is, of course, perfectly correct, the printing seal being the engraved printing block). The inference is, I think, justified, and since Chinese books were outside his sphere of interest, Marco's silence should not surprise us unduly.

The second notable omission in the *DW* mentioned by F. W. is tea (pp. 71-72). Here, again, I am of the opinion that cultural differences played a key role. This herbal infusion which has become so much part of our daily life, and hence so important to some of us, was apparently so trivial an item for Marco that he did not deem it worth noting, or forgot about it, as F. W. herself surmises (p. 74). The Mongols did not drink tea and, in all likelihood, he did not drink it either. Odoric was just as blind to this Chinese custom as his Venetian predecessor, and so was the Arab Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. The same applies to the use of chopsticks.⁷⁹

Thus, in many respects, China, or rather the Chinese, remained a closed book to Marco: this no doubt accounts for his ignorance regarding the peculiar custom of footbinding. If he had no close contact with Chinese society – and he obviously didn't – he would have found it difficult to investigate this practice, confined as it was to a stratum of that society alien to him and one largely removed from the public eye. Incidentally, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also failed to notice, or to record, footbinding, whereas Odoric did.⁸⁰

Ming period banknote. For a reproduction of a Yüan specimen, see Iwamura Shinobu, *Mongoru shakai keizai-shi no kenkyū* (*Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Mongols*), Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Bungaku Kenkyūjo, 1968, Pl. 2.

79 In a newspaper report by Cherry Ripe (*The Weekend Australian* of 30/31 March 1996), F. W. is quoted as saying, in relation to Marco Polo's veracity, that 'what I first questioned were the things he left out, like chopsticks and tea'. I do not know whether the report is correct, but in her book F. W. has wisely refrained from mentioning chopsticks alongside tea.

80 See Van Den Wyngaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 487-488. Cf. Yule, *Cathay*, II, p. 236. However, according to Reichert, *op. cit.*, p. 105, there is an indication from a passage of the *DW* which occurs only in Z that Marco had observed the particular gait of the Chinese women with bound feet (*DW*, p. 305: '... maidens always step so gently in the progress of their walk that one foot never goes before the other by more than a finger ...'), but had incorrectly interpreted the reason for their dainty walk. Cf. Latham, p. 197. This story may well be apocryphal, but it should be mentioned.

Cormorant fishing, noted by Odoric but not by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa,⁸¹ is also omitted from Marco's narrative, possibly through oversight. We must always bear in mind that the *DW*, comprehensive as it is, still is not an encyclopaedia, and that an occasional topic of interest is left out, just as some striking items fail to be noted in the narratives of other travellers as we have observed.

The chapter concludes with the remark that 'it is puzzling that tea, porcelain and bound feet, three things that symbolise China in the Western imagination, are all missing from an avowedly popular text' (p. 75). Here some confusion appears to have crept in, since F. W. dwells on Marco's description of porcelain only a few pages earlier (pp. 65-66; see also p. 111).

Chapter Nine is devoted to ice-cream and spaghetti, and the popular belief that associates Marco Polo with the introduction of those products – or rather the way to make them – into Europe.

Ice-cream is not mentioned at all in the *DW*, and interesting as the subject is, it has really nothing to do with our traveller. He may have enjoyed sherbets en route, but they don't seem to have made a lasting impression on him. It is a different matter with noodles. F. W. writes that Marco 'mentioned the use of noodles ... but never described how things were cooked or served' (p. 76). Further on she writes: 'Thus argument arises over whether Marco Polo took spaghetti and ravioli to China, where they were transformed into *jiaozi* and noodles, staple foods of the north, or whether he brought noodles and *jiaozi* back to Italy, where they became spaghetti and ravioli' (p. 77). She then proceeds to explain that noodles and *chiao-tzu* (*jiaozi*) 'are thought to be the result of Arab influence via Central Asia'; this would apply to Europe as well as China, since Arab influence spread in both directions. Marco Polo had nothing to do with it, either way.

It is a pity that F. W. did not carry her analysis a little further, for that would have revealed some curious facts directly related to the topic at hand. The R(amusio) text of the *DW* is the only one that contains the passage concerning 'noodles'. It reads as follows: 'These people [i. e., the Mongols, and the northern and southern Chinese – I. R.] do not use bread, but only boil these three kinds of grain [i. e., rice, panick and millet – I. R.] with the milk or flesh, and eat them. And wheat with them does not give so great increase; but what they reap they eat only as macaroni and other viands made of dough.'⁸²

81 See Van Den Wyngaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-463. Cf. Yule, *op. cit.*, II, p. 190.

82 *DW*, p. 244.

In R, the word that Moule translates as 'macaroni' is actually *lasagne*, which is rendered as 'vermicelli' by Yule (following Marsden), and as 'noodles' by Latham.⁸³ But lasagne, as we all know, are neither vermicelli nor macaroni (both well attested in Italian cuisine in the 13th and 14th c. respectively), i. e. a rolled tubular type of pasta; they are flat and cut into large strips. The Chinese knew several varieties of noodles which they have been consuming at least since the early centuries of our era,⁸⁴ and they had also a broader type of pasta which, I think, is attested for the first time in the Yüan period. The well-known imperial dietary guide *Yin-shan cheng-yao* [*The Correct Summary of Food and Drink*] by the Uighur (?) Hu Ssu-hui (= Hu-ssu-hui, *Qusqī), which was presented to the throne in 1330, contains a recipe for 'lengthwise belt (or ribbon) noodles' (*ching-tai mien*), i. e. a wide, ribbon-like pasta, no doubt a type of lasagna.⁸⁵

Therefore, what the *DW* says about noodles has, strictly speaking, nothing to do with spaghetti or ravioli, and the legend that arose concerning these types of pasta (but especially spaghetti) and Marco Polo originates not so much from his account, but from the incorrect translations of the word *lasagne* made in the nineteenth century and perpetuated in the twentieth.

Finally, the very passage in R that I quoted above describes *how* the Mongols and Chinese cooked the cereals in question, viz. they boiled them with milk or meat, thus contradicting F. W.'s categorical statement that Marco 'never described' the manner of cooking.

In Chapter Ten, F. W. reviews Marco Polo's description of Peking (Cambaluc/Taidu), Su-chou (Sugiu), Hang-chou (Quinsai), Ch'üan-chou (Çaiton), and Yang-chou (Yangiu). Marco's vivid description of Hang-chou which, as F. W. points out, is largely borne out by the Chinese sources, was

83 See L.F. Benedetto's critical edition (cf. above, n. 4), p. 95, note; Yule, *The Book*, I, p. 438, n. 4; Latham, p. 152.

84 See F. Sabban, 'Cuisine à la cour de l'empereur de Chine au XIV^e siècle: les aspects culinaires du Yinshan Zhengyao de Hu Sihui', *Medievals* 5: Nov. 1983, p. 39. A mediocre English version of Sabban's paper appeared in *Food and Foodways* 1:1986, pp. 161-196.

85 Hu Ssu-hui, *Yin-shan cheng-yao*, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed., Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1934, ch. 1, p. 38a. The reconstruction of the original name of the (almost certainly) sinicized Uighur author as *Qusqī (meaning 'Gentle' or 'Modest' in Turkic) is mine. I shall discuss this question on another occasion. For Chinese noodles and other pasta recipes contained in the *Yin-shan cheng-yao*, see Sabban, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-55. On the *Yin-shan cheng-yao* itself see *ibid.*, pp. 31-34; E.N. Anderson, 'Food and Health at the Mongol Court', in Kaplan and Whisenhunt, *op. cit.*, p. 17ff.

used by Prof. Jacques Gernet in his portrayal of daily life in China at the time of the Mongol invasion.⁸⁶ F. W. is acquainted with this work, but not with the best study on Marco's 'Quinsai' in a western language, i. e. Moule's essay of 1957 which is notably absent from her bibliography.⁸⁷

With regard to Peking, she notes some discrepancies between Marco's description and what we know from other sources and the present situation, as in the instance of the so-called Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of the city. Marco's description is definitely incorrect, since this structure, still well preserved today, never had twenty-four arches as he claims. F. W. writes: 'Marco Polo had either forgotten the details or was exaggerating again' (p. 88). I think that this example, as several other instances of the same kind, is a further indication that Marco was chiefly relying on memory for his descriptions of localities, and not on 'travel guides', Persian or otherwise, which – had they existed – would have supplied him with the correct information.

Chapter Eleven, on Marco Polo's failure to mention the Great Wall of China, should have never been included in the discussion. To revive the old argument in the present context is to turn the clock back to pre-1983 notions of the Wall, i. e. to mythology. The fundamental article on 'The Problem of the Great Wall of China' by Arthur N. Waldron, which appeared in 1983,⁸⁸ and, in 1990, his subsequent book on the subject of the Wall,⁸⁹ have definitely dispelled any lingering doubts as to the importance of this structure before the mid- and late Ming period (16th-17th c.). The Great Wall of which we speak today, and that referred to by European authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is the Ming Wall. Before the Ming there was a series of ramparts, built under different dynasties and mostly made of pounded earth reinforced with wooden stakes or bundled twigs. At no stage was there a continuous 'line', only discontinuous walls, differently placed and shifting position from dynasty to dynasty.⁹⁰ What remained

86 J. Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276*, tr. by H.M. Wright, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962.

87 'Quinsai', in *Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo* (see above, n. 68), pp. 1-51. See also *ibid.*, pp. 51-52, for the Additional Note on Su-chou.

88 *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43:1983, pp. 643-663.

89 A.N. Waldron, *The Great Wall of China From History to Myth*, Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990. See, especially, pp. 16ff., 21ff., 26ff.

90 See Waldron, 'The Problem', pp. 654-655.

unchanged throughout the centuries was the literary fiction of the 'long wall' (*ch'ang-ch'eng*) built by the Ch'in emperor Shih-huang in the third century B.C., i. e. the myth of the Great Wall which has lasted until today. Certainly there is no mention of the Wall in the *Yüan shih* (a source that F. W. is fond of citing), and references to ruins and sections of these earlier ramparts are extremely scanty in the Yüan period.⁹¹ F. W. is well aware of these facts since she draws much of the general information on the Wall for this chapter from Waldron's book. Nevertheless she concludes the chapter with the following amazing statement: 'My feeling is that even without serious wall-building or wall-repairing efforts, there would have been much of the tamped earth wall surviving in the thirteenth century and that it would have been very difficult to have travelled into China from the West without noticing it; thus the omission of the Wall in the *Description of the World* is telling' (p. 101). What Marco Polo's silence tells us is that he may well have noticed some crumbling, or at any rate dilapidated sections of earth ramparts and watch towers when crossing into China, but was not sufficiently impressed by these ruins to record them in his book. In his journey across Iraq, Persia and Central Asia, he must have come across many and, at times, more memorable ruins than anything he saw in China, but no doubt owing largely to his lack of interest in antiquities, he is silent about them too. No other contemporary traveller who crossed the so-called 'Wall' north of Peking ever mentions its existence, simply because it was not there.⁹² We

91 As indicated by Wang Kuo-wei, the references to the Great Wall (*ch'ang-ch'eng*) in the *Yüan shih* are actually to the 'border mound-wall (lit. „trench“)' (*chieh-hao*), known also as the 'Outer Defence Wall' (*wai-pao*), built by the Jurchen Chin and completed in 1198. The same applies to the single reference to it in Chao Hung's *Meng-Ta pei-lu* (1221). See Wang's (*Ting-pen*) *Kuan-t'ang chi-lin* [*The Kuan-t'ang Miscellany*], repr. Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1964, ch. 15, pp. 13b-14a (= 712-713). For references in other Mongol-Yüan works, see below, n. 92.

92 There is no mention of the Wall in the travel accounts of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1227) and Li Chih-ch'ang (1228). Chang Te-hui, who wrote an official report of his mission to the North in 1247, mentions a neglected wall and a dilapidated fort just northwest of Chang-chia k'ou (Kalgan), both no doubt remnants of the Chin wall mentioned above. See Yao Ts'ung-wu, 'Chang Te-hui „Ling-pei chi-hsing“ tsu-pen chiao-chu' ('The Complete Text of Chang Te-hui's „Record of a Journey beyond the Northern Ranges,“ edited with Notes'), *Wen shih chih hsüeh-pao* 11: August 1962, p. 10. Cf. R. Lamon, *Zhang Dehui ou une possible collaboration sino-mongole durant la dynastie Yuan*, unpublished dissertation, Faculté des Lettres, Université de Genève, Geneva, [1996], pp. 24, 25. See also Waldron, 'The Problem', pp. 655-656 and nn.

must also remember that Marco was unaware of the Chinese literary tradition concerning Ch'in Shih-huang's wall and therefore would not have associated what appeared to him as mounds of earth or at best remnants of ancient fortifications with the existence – real or imaginary – of a long wall stretching from one end to the other of north China. In fact, for Marco Polo there was no China (Chung-kuo) as such, but only a series of provinces and kingdoms (Tangut, Succiu, Ergiuul, Egrigaia, Tenduc, Catai, Manzi) with different people in them all subject to the Great Kaan.⁹³ Even if he had encountered longer stretches of earth walls, such as the Outer Defence Wall built by the Jurchen Chin at the end of the twelfth century – an impressive structure, but in serious disrepair already in 1247, thirty years before Marco may have seen it – he would hardly have taken it for the eighth wonder of the world, but merely for some local defence work.

Indeed, the Wall would qualify as a wonder of the universe if its length were truly 'between 24,482 and 31,250 miles', these being according to F. W. the estimates on which 'arguments still continue' (p. 96). F. W. fails to explain, however, that these figures are mere estimates of the total length of the separate defence walls and disjointed wall sections ancient and modern (including battlements, doublings, crossings back, etc.) found in different locations along the northern borders of China.⁹⁴ As Waldron has rightly

71, 72. I think that Waldron's reference to Chang Te-hui's account pointing to 'Dalai Nür in northwest Liaoning' needs revising. Ibn Battūṭa did not see any portion of the 'long wall', but in his account there is a reference to the 'Rampart of Gog and Magog' which seems to combine a report of the Chinese tradition of the Great Wall picked up by Arab travellers with the classical story of the wall built by Alexander the Great to shut off the dreaded people of the north. See Yule, *Cathay*, IV, p. 123; Gibb, *op. cit.*, p. 896; and Waldron, *op. cit.*, p. 656. We find an echo of this also in the *DW*. See Olschki, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, n. 44, 64, n. 31, 308, n. 15. Cf. G. de Rubrouck, *Voyage dans l'empire mongol (1253-1255)*, tr. and comm. by C. and R. Kappler, Paris: Payot, 1985, pp. 270-272 ('Porte de fer – Muraille d'Alexandre').

93 Cf. *The Cambridge History of China* (see above, n. 13), p. 21.

94 See Waldron, 'The Problem', p. 645, n. 8; Idem, *The Great Wall of China*, p. 5. In a recent Chinese official source, the figure given for the total length of the Ming Wall is over 6,350 km, and that for all the walls making up the Great Wall is in excess of 50,000 km. See the *Chung-kuo ta pai-k'o-ch'üan-shu* [*The Great Chinese Encyclopaedia*], *Chung-kuo ti-li* [*The Geography of China*], Peking, Shanghai: Chung-kuo ta pai-k'o-ch'üan-shu ch'u-pan-shê, 1993, p. 44.

surmised, 'in the absence of surveys and reliable cartography, it must be admitted that the figure cannot be known.'⁹⁵

Chapter Twelve, entitled 'Not unique and certainly not a siege engineer', deals with the earlier mentioned question of the Polos not being the first Europeans to visit Qubilai's court, as Marco states, and of his claim to have participated with his father and uncle in the siege of Hsiang-yang (Saianfu). The chapter begins with a misquote. F. W. writes: 'One of Marco Polo's claims was that he, his father and uncle were the first „Latins” ever seen by Qubilai Khan. „*Il avait tres [sic] grande joie de leur venue comme [sic] un qui n'a jamais vu aucun Latin* (He was greatly pleased by their arrival as he had never seen an Italian)'" (p. 102).⁹⁶ What Marco actually says is that Qubilai was pleased to see the two brothers Nicolò and Maffeo 'as one who had never seen any Latin'.⁹⁷ This was the *first* journey of the Polo brothers to Qubilai (in 1265 or 1266) and Marco was not with them yet.

Then, and more importantly, we have a problem of semantics. Had F. W. taken the word 'Latin' in its usual meaning of a person belonging to any of the Western nations of Europe who recognized the Latin Church (in contradistinction to 'Greek'), hence synonymous with 'Frank',⁹⁸ she would be correct in stating that they were 'not unique', since they had been preceded by Frankish envoys only a few years before. However, as she does equate 'Latin' with 'Italian', Marco Polo may be right after all. We do not know whether Qubilai had met John of Pian di Carpine at Güyüg's *ordo* in 1246. If the two men did not meet on that occasion, it is almost certain that the Polo brothers were the first Italians whom the Mongol emperor encountered, thus vindicating Marco's claim. Olschki was also of the opinion that 'Latini' meant 'Italians'; but from the way the word is used in the *DW*, I am inclined to think that 'Latins' in the present context is also used as a

95 Waldron, *loc. cit.*

96 The *DW* text as quoted by Franke, 'Sino-Western Contacts', p. 54, and cited after him by F. W. (both her transcription and translation are inaccurate), is somewhat different in F. See Benedetto, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Cf. Latham, pp. 35-36. Franke has taken his quotation from Hambis' modern French version (see above, n. 67), p. 5.

97 *DW*, p. 77.

98 See Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, VI, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1845, p. 37c, s. v. 'Latini'; *The Oxford English Dictionary*, VI, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, p. 97a (3), s. v. 'Latin'.

synonym of 'Franks', and that Marco is therefore wrong.⁹⁹ In all likelihood, he was not aware of the earlier Frankish embassy, and what he says about Qubilai being pleased to see Nicolò and Maffeo 'as one who had never seen any Latin' is just a bit of verbiage in the Prologue to enhance his presentation, something one ought not to take too literally.

Marco's claim to have been at the siege of the important Sung stronghold of Hsiang-yang in Hu-pei is a more serious matter, for Marco not only states that he, his father and uncle attended it, but also that they were actually instrumental in bringing about the surrender of the city in their capacity as mangonel experts.¹⁰⁰

Now, we know that the siege of Hsiang-yang ended in January 1273, and that the three Polos reached north China in 1274/5 (see above, n. 40). Although Pelliot has some references to Hsiang-yang in his *Notes on Marco Polo*,¹⁰¹ he wrote no specific entry on it in that work. It is Moule who, as in the case of 'Quinsai' and 'Acmat Bailo', wrote the note on 'Saianfu' and did so most competently.¹⁰² It is therefore all the more regrettable that Moule's contribution should have been overlooked by F. W.

After having reviewed the Persian and Chinese accounts of the siege and capture of the city, and having compared them with the description found in Marco's book, Moule has this to say: 'For the story of the participation of Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco in the siege no defence seems to be possible; it cannot be true and it can hardly be due to failure of memory. We can only guess that Rustichello or some later editor felt that a good story would be made better by the substitution of the familiar names of his heroes for the strange uncouth names of unknown foreigners; and it is to be specially noted that this embarrassing statement is not found in the abbreviated texts of the MSS. Z and L, or in the full text of V (*cf.* I, 317.), and Z, L, V form an important and related group of texts.'¹⁰³

99 On p. 103, F. W. acknowledges that the Polos may have been 'the first Italians in the Mongol capital', and on p. 107 she suggests that Marco by using the term 'Latins' was perhaps 'distinguishing Italians from all other Europeans', thus adding to the confusion caused by the ambiguity of the word 'Latin'. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 87 and n. 102, bases his interpretation of 'Latin' (= 'Italian') on Dante's usage, but this does not necessarily apply to Marco's usage.

100 See the *DW*, pp. 317-319; Latham, pp. 207-208.

101 See Pelliot, *Notes*, III, p. 116b.

102 See Moule, *Quinsai*, pp. 70-78.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

In my opinion, the above statement is still the best commentary on a question which has vexed Polan scholars for decades.¹⁰⁴

Chapter Thirteen: 'Who were the Polos?' is mainly concerned with Marco's ancestry and the scanty data we possess on the Polo family. F. W.'s information derives mainly from the introductions to Yule's *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* and Moule & Pelliot's *Marco Polo. The Description of the World*,¹⁰⁵ and from R. Gallo's fundamental article of 1955.¹⁰⁶ However, new material has turned up since then in the State Archives of Venice which has been studied by Gallo, B. Szczesniak and others.¹⁰⁷ The results of their investigations must be taken into account as they have a direct bearing on the topic treated by F. W. in this and other chapters.¹⁰⁸ For example, according to Szczesniak, a confusion has occurred between the members of the Polo family of the S. Severo Parish and those of S. Giovanni Grisostomo, owing to the fact that the documents pertaining to the Polos mention two individuals named Maffeo, two named Nicolò and three named Marco. There were, in fact, two lines, viz. that of Marco Polo the Elder of S. Severo (who was one of the two uncles of our Marco, the other being Maffeo) *nicknamed Milion(e)*, whose son was Nicolò the Elder and

104 Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 342ff., who inclines to the view that the story of the Polos' participation in the siege was not in the original recension, and that Rustichello is not to be blamed for it. On the other hand, Prof. Yang Chih-chiu is of the opinion that the Polos, although not personally involved in the siege and capture of Hsiang-yang, heard the story of how it had been forced to surrender by the use of Persian catapults when they visited Hsiang-yang. Later Marco falsely claimed credit for the capture. Yang also thinks that Rustichello may be blamed for some of these 'mistakes'. See 'Ma-k'o Po-lo yü Chung-kuo', p. 57.

105 The titles of both of these works are given incorrectly by F. W. as *The Travels of Marco Polo* (p. 153 *et passim*), and *Marco Polo: The Travels* (p. 154 *et passim*).

106 R. Gallo, 'Marco Polo, la sua famiglia e il suo libro', in *Nel VII centenario della nascita di Marco Polo*, Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1955, pp. 65-193. This article is not cited in F. W.'s Notes to Chapter Thirteenth, but is listed in her Bibliography (p. 171).

107 See, in particular, R. Gallo, 'Nuovi documenti riguardanti Marco Polo', in *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, vol. 116, Venezia, 1958, pp. 309-325; B. Szczesniak, 'Marco Polo's Surname „Milione” According to Newly Discovered Documents', *T'oung Pao* 48:1960, pp. 447-452; and A. Zorzi, 'Marco Polo e la Venezia del suo tempo', in A. Zorzi, *Marco Polo: Venezia e l'Oriente*, Milano: Electa, 1981, pp. 13-40.

108 I. e., Chapter Two, p. 14, and Chapter Fourteen, p. 128.

grandson was Marco (or Marcolino), both of whom inherited the nickname Milione; and that of Nicolò Polo of S. Giovanni Grisostomo, the father of our Marco. (The second Maffeo was the son of the second wife of Nicolò, father of our Marco and, therefore, the latter's half brother.) Thus, the nickname Milione belonged *only* to the line of Marco Polo the Elder, and was borne by his grandson Marco. The attribution of this nickname to our Marco is, according to Szczesniak, due to Jacopo d'Acqui who confused Marco son of Nicolò the Elder of S. Severo with Marco son of Nicolò of S. Giovanni Grisostomo.¹⁰⁹ His mistake was uncritically accepted by Ramusio, who compounded it with other unreliable reports concerning Marco and the Polo family, thus giving origin to the 'traditional' – largely legendary – account of Marco Polo subsequently adopted by most Polan writers to this day.¹¹⁰

Next, F. W. describes the journey of Nicolò and Maffeo across Central Asia to Qubilai's court, which they reached in the mid-1260s. According to F. W., the Polo brothers met Qubilai at the Mongol capital Karakorum (Qaraqorum). This is simply impossible, since Qubilai was in north China in 1265 and 1266. Soon after Li T'an's rebellion (1262), the emperor had transferred his headquarters from Chin-lien ch'uan on the Shan-tien River in present-day Inner Mongolia to the newly established capital K'ai-p'ing/Shang-tu (To-lun). In the following years, he was busy with the construction, or rather reconstruction plans for the former Chin capital Yen-ching/Chung-tu, which, as Ta-tu/Daidu (Peking), was to become his main residence and the capital of the empire. The court moved there every autumn, returning to Shang-tu the following spring. The surrender of his younger brother Ariq Böge, and the famous encounter between the latter and Qubilai in 1264, took place in Shang-tu.¹¹¹ Since we do not know the exact

109 Szczesniak, *op. cit.* (see his summing up on p. 452). Cf. Zorzi, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

110 See Zorzi's remarks in Zorzi, *op. cit.*, pp. 20ff., 24, 28.

111 For all these events, see the *Yüan shih*, ch. 5 and 6; Chou Liang-hsiao, *Hu-pi-lieh. Hubilie*, Ch'ang-ch'un: Chi-lin chiao-yü ch'u-pan shê, 1986, pp. 95-99; de Rachewiltz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-259. The *Yüan shih* records the emperor's movements 'to' and 'from' Shang-tu (see, e. g., ch. 6, pp. 4a-b, 6a, 10b), but we know that he went in the autumn to Yen-ching/Chung-tu, the later Ta-tu, from the context, as well as from other sources. It is, therefore, usually assumed by historians that Nicolò and Maffeo first met Qubilai in that city. See, e. g., R. Grousset, *L'empire des steppes. Attila. Gengis-khan. Tamerlan*, Paris: Payot, 1948, p. 375. However, the Prologue of the *DW* is not very specific about the place where Qubilai was at the time, merely stating that

date of the Polos' meeting with the Mongol emperor as described in the Prologue of the *DW*, it is impossible to say where it occurred, but it must have been either Shang-tu, Yen-ching, or a locality in the same region, i. e. north of Peking. Therefore, the whole section on Karakorum on pp. 116-117 is not pertinent.¹¹²

In connection with Nicolò and Maffeo's departure, F. W. mentions Qubilai's granting of 'a gold tablet as a form of protection' to the two brothers, adding that these tablets 'are discussed at confusing length by Yule' (p. 118). F. W. returns to the subject of the gold tablets in the following chapters (pp. 130 and 148-149; cf. also p. 13), for the Polos were given several of these tablets in the course of their journeys and some were still in possession of the Polo family long after their return to Venice in 1295. In the *DW*, Marco gives a detailed description of the tablets, which played an important role in the government system of the Mongols at the time. The Mongols, following the Khitans and the Jurchens, had also adopted the Chinese tablets of authority (in Chinese *p'ai-tzu*, known in the West as *paizas*); these oblong (sometimes round) metal tablets bearing a short inscription and a hole for a strap were given to dignitaries and envoys on official missions. They were also signs of certain offices, both civil and military, such as those of imperial commissioner (*darugači*) and army leader (*noyan*). They granted the holder authority to obtain free lodgings, transportation and all the provisions required en route. They were made of gold, silver and bronze according to the status of the recipient — from envoy plenipotentiary to simple messenger. The average size of the oblong *paizas* was ca. 30 x 9 cm.¹¹³

As soon as they occupied north China at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mongols began using *paizas* on a large scale (to the despair of the Chinese). Their use continued throughout the Yüan dynasty, and the

Nicolò and Maffeo travelled towards the north and northeast to get there (*DW*, p. 77; Latham, p. 35).

112 As I stated earlier (n. 25), I am convinced that neither Nicolò and Maffeo, nor Marco, ever visited Qaraqorum.

113 For these tablets of authority or *paizas* (called *gerege* in Mongolian), see the essential bibliographical references in I. de Rachewiltz, 'The *Hsi-yu lu* of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai', *Monumenta Serica* 21:1962, pp. 79-80, n. 191; Idem, 'Two Recently Published *P'ai-tzu* Discovered in China', *Acta Orientalia Hung.* 36:1982, p. 413, n. 2, and 414, n. 5; Jackson, *The Mission of Friar William Rubruck*, p. 186, n. 2. See also Yule, *The Book*, I, pp. 351-354, n. 2.

Mongols in Iran as well as the khans of the Golden Horde regularly employed them. Several *paizas* in silver and bronze still exist in museums in Russia, Mongolia and China, and in private collections, with inscriptions in Uighur and 'Phags-pa scripts, as well as in Persian and Chinese. No gold *paiza* has survived: they were presumably all melted down after the collapse of Mongol rule. We have, however, a mass of information on them in numerous sources, mainly Chinese, and they have been much studied by scholars, especially in Japan. The gold *paizas* are frequently mentioned in the *Yüan shih* and in the administrative treatises of the Yüan. There were several types: with a tiger 'head', i. e. top; with a lion top; with a gerfalcon top; and just plain.¹¹⁴ They were used in conjunction with imperial credentials or warrants (*jarlig*) which specified the role and privileges of the holder. Marco Polo refers several times to these *paizas* (called *tables* in F),¹¹⁵ both in relation to those that Qubilai gave to him and to his father and uncle, and to those that were given to military commanders and to the messengers using the government post-relay system.¹¹⁶ He distinguishes between the various types of *paizas* (gold with and without animal tops, and silver) and gives a fairly accurate translation of the Mongolian inscription carved on them, showing that he was acquainted with *paizas* inscribed in Uighur script, as well as with those in 'Phags-pa script.¹¹⁷ He also mentions the warrants (F:

114 For the use of *paizas* under the Liao, Chin and Yüan dynasties, see in particular Yanai Watari, *Mōkoshi kenkyū* [*Studies on Mongol History*], repr. Tōkyō: Tōkō Shoin, 1966, p. 860ff.

115 See Benedetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 12, etc.

116 See the *DW*, pp. 79, 90-91, 203-204, 241-242, 246; Latham, pp. 37, 43-44, 121, 149-150, 154.

117 In Moule's English translation: 'By the power and strength of the great God and of the great grace which he has given to our emperor, blest be the name of the great Kaan, and may all those who shall not obey him be slain and destroyed' (*DW*, p. 203). Cf. (1) the text of the Minusinsk and Nyuki *paizas* in 'Phags-pa script (*post* 1269): 'By the strength of Eternal Heaven. Let the name of the Emperor (*qa an*) be sacred! He who shall not respect (it), shall be guilty and die'; and (2) the text of the *paiza* of Özbek (betw. 1312 and 1340) in Uighur script: 'By the strength of Eternal Heaven (and) by the protection of the Great Fortune and Flame (= Spirit). Order of Ösbeq. He who shall not respect (it), shall be guilty and die'. See N. Poppe, *The Mongolian Monuments in ḥP'ags-pa Script*, 2nd ed. rev. & ed. by J.R. Krueger, *Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen* 8, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1957, p. 58; L. Ligeti, *Monuments préclassiques I: XIII^e et XIV^e siècles, Monumenta linguae Mongolicae collecta* II, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972, p. 287. The wording in the *paizas* in

brevilejes con escritura) which accompany the *paiza*.¹¹⁸ His testimony indicates an obvious familiarity with the tablets and their use.

In her scattered references to the problem of the Polos and the *paizas* that Marco claims they were given during their journey, F. W. plays down the significance of the evidence from the *DW* and collateral documentation, while intimating some dubious business dealings on the part of Marco – all these questions being actually interrelated. Since I believe that the evidence provided by the *paizas* is vital in proving that the Polos went to China, it is necessary to take a close look at F. W.'s arguments and the original sources on that count.

On p. 118 in the present chapter, F. W. says that 'it is difficult to assess how many [of the gold tablets – I.R.] the Polos eventually acquired, for they were said to have been offered more on their return journey. According to some texts, the final count was three, one on the first trip, two on the second,¹⁴ though some make it five.¹⁵

That is not correct. The final count is seven: one from Qubilai to Nicolò and Maffeo on the first trip (1266); two from Qubilai to the three Polos before they left China (1290/91); and four from Gaigatu to the three Polos before they left Persia (1293).¹¹⁹ F. W.'s statement that 'some make it five' is unfounded. The reference she gives (n. 15 on p. 166) is to Aldo Ricci (trans.), *The Travels of Marco Polo* (London, 1931), p. 17. On that page we read the following: 'And you must also know that Kiacatu [= Gaigatu – I.R.] gave them four gold Tablets of Authority, each of which was a cubit long and five fingers in breadth, and weighed three or four pounds ... Of the four gold tablets, two bore gerfalcons, one a lion, and the fourth was smooth.'

'Phags-pa script is slightly different from that in the *paizas* in Uighur script, as is evident from extant *paizas*. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 284 and 287. Marco Polo must have had or seen both types. The *paiza* that was given to Nicolò and Maffeo in 1266 would have had the inscription in Uighur, as the 'Phags-pa script was introduced only in 1269, whereas the inscription on the two *paizas* that were issued to the three Polos in 1290/91 would have been in 'Phags-pa script. This explains the conflation of the wording of both types of *paizas* in his single rendering.

118 See Benedetto, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Cf. the *DW*, p. 204; Latham, p. 12.

119 See the *DW*, pp. 79, 90, 91; Latham, pp. 37, 43, 44. Only the Latin compendium (L) gives 'one' instead of 'two' with regard to the *paizas* given to the two Polos in 1290/91. All the other MSS. have 'two', and this is the reading adopted by Benedetto, Moule, etc.

Evidently, F. W. has read this section in haste and has confused the number of tablets (four) with their breadth in fingers (five).

On the same p. 118, F. W. writes: 'The number of the tablets is important, however, for in later life, back in Venice, one of them, at least, provoked a bitter argument between Marco and his uncle'. The theme is resumed on p. 130 (Chapter Fourteen), in connection with the description of a list of objects found in Marco Polo's house after his death in 1324, which is reproduced by Moule.¹²⁰ One of the items is of doubtful interpretation. F. W. writes: 'Moule suggests that one item can be read either as a „piece of cloth of gold made to order” which would be of Near-Eastern rather than Chinese origin, or „*tables d'or des comandements*”, which would be the sort of passport or permission to travel inscribed on gold of the type handed to his father and uncle when they left Karakorum to return home after their first trip. A gold *laisser-passer* [*sic*] or passport of this type was the subject of a dispute between Marco and his uncle Maffeo. In Maffeo's will of 1310 there is a passage relating to the still unresolved question of a loan to Marco of money, jewels and a gold tablet from the Great Khan. The money in question was apparently repayment for a loss incurred in Trebizond [*sic*] (Trabzon). There is no date given for this loss so it is impossible to tell whether it occurred through normal trading activities or on their famous travels.³² Marco's possible possession of a golden tablet and evidence of an argument with his uncle of sufficient gravity to be recorded in his will suggest considerable family division. In Marco's defence, it could be argued that there appear to have been several of these handed out, to his father and uncle, at least, on different occasions and if he was, as he claimed, with them, he might have been entitled to one. The inventory of his possessions is partly illegible and appears, if it refers to a gold tablet at all, to use a different term for it than that which appears in his uncle's will.^{33, 121}

This whole section must be read in conjunction with the follow-up on p. 148 ('Conclusions'): 'The existence of the golden passports are evidence of a reasonably high-level contact with one of the Mongol rulers, though not necessarily Qubilai himself. Might part of the family dispute over gold tablets (revealed in 1310, after the compilation of the *Description of the World*) have been Marco Polo's claim to have been there himself when he wasn't? Might his father and uncle have made a dangerous journey and

120 See the *DW*, pp. 554-558, and 555, n. 1.

121 In n. 32 on p. 167, F. W. gives a reference to P. Jackson, *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, which is not relevant to the issue at hand.

returned with one or more gold *laisser-passer* [*sic*] tablets, only to have had their chance of glory stolen by Marco writing himself into the story whilst in prison? To add insult to injury, Maffeo's will of 1310 suggests some jiggery-pokery over one of these gold tablets by Marco. Different texts suggest that a varying number of these tablets were distributed to the Polos at different times; it is not easy to count how many there eventually were, and whether Marco himself ever received one from the hands of the Khan. The dispute, recorded in a will, seems perhaps more significant than the possible number surviving'.

I have quoted the above sections at length because, on the one hand, they are an important element in F. W.'s argument *contra* Marco Polo, and on the other because they are a good illustration of her approach and methodology.

With regard to Maffeo's will of 6 February 1310, which is also reproduced and discussed by Moule,¹²² the following points should be made:

1. Maffeo, together with his brothers Marco the Elder and Nicolò, had formed a 'brotherly company', to which were associated also other members of the Polo family. The company's gains and losses were shared among the members, but there were also private transactions, e. g. loans, between them. Maffeo's will is largely about the settling of outstanding financial obligations involving not only Marco, but also Maffeo's other nephew Nicolò the Elder (the son of Marco the Elder), and Nicolò's son Marcolino.

2. There is no evidence in the will of a 'family dispute' about gold tablets, or of any 'jiggery-pokery' on Marco's part. Marco had lent money to his uncle, and the latter specifies in the document that this has been repaid in full; at the time when the will was drawn, it was Marco who owed his uncle one third of a thousand pounds that had been recovered from a loss of four thousand *hyperpera* incurred in Trebizond: Maffeo specifies that he is entitled also to one third of any moneys that will be recovered in future from that loss. There is no reference in the will to 'one of these gold tablets' causing trouble. The text simply says: 'I wish to make known to my executors that I have satisfied the aforesaid Marco Polo my nephew with regard to those 500 pounds which he lent me to be given by me as a loan to the aforesaid Nicolo Polo [my nephew] as I said before, and with regard to half of a set jewel which is in the house belonging to me, and with regard to *the*

122 *DW*, pp. 529-535, and 28-29.

*three tablets of gold which were from the magnificent Chan of the Tartars.*¹²³ We have no means of knowing what was the background of the arrangement concerning the set jewel and the three gold tablets, but nothing in the phrasing of the will suggests that there was anything 'fishy' about it. F. W. has evidently misunderstood the text, as she did also in relation to the number of tablets involved (three instead of one).¹²⁴

3. The fact that there was no dispute with Marco, and that he bore no grudge against him, is shown by Maffeo's bequest to Marco of part of his share in the estate at S. Giovanni Grisostomo, thus making Marco owner of more than half the property.¹²⁵

With regard to the list of Marco's possessions, one should mention that whereas the identification of the 'piece of cloth of gold made to order' remains doubtful, there is no doubt at all about another item listed fourteen lines below, viz. 'a large gold tablet of command',¹²⁶ which can only be a gold *paiza*, and which has been overlooked by F. W. We do not know what happened to the three gold *paizas* mentioned in Maffeo's will, but at least one of them was still in existence in Marco's household in 1324. Another object in the same list is worth noting: 'a gold *bochta* with stones and pearls'. The *bochta* (Mong. *boġta*[ġ]) was, as is known, the elaborate headgear borne by high-ranking Mongolian ladies.¹²⁷

What has, once again, escaped F. W.'s attention is the relevance and, indeed, crucial importance of the above evidence. She is more concerned with a hypothetical dispute between Maffeo and Marco Polo than with the fact that in the Polos' family there existed at the time 'three tablets of gold

123 *DW*, p. 28. The emphasis is mine.

124 F. W. may have been led astray by a speculative remark by Moule (*ibid.*, p. 555, n. 1) on the gold tablets 'about the possession of which there seems to have been some dispute between Marco and his uncle Maffeo'. This is just a conjecture on Moule's part and he does not in fact mention it when discussing the provisions of the will on p. 29.

125 See Moule's comments, *ibid.*, p. 29.

126 *DW*, p. 556. Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

127 See *ibid.*, p. 106. For the *boġta*(ġ), the characteristic tall headdress decked with feathers, gems, and pearls, see the references in G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, I: *Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1963, pp. 210-212, no. 89.

which were from the magnificent (lit., „great”) Chan of the Tartars.’ The ‘Great Chan of the Tartars’ can only be Qubilai, for this is the way he is referred to throughout the *DW*.¹²⁸ Hence, F. W.’s statement that ‘the existence of the golden passports are evidence of a reasonably high-level contact with one of the Mongol rulers, though not necessarily Qubilai himself’ is incorrect, too. The Polos had three gold *paizas* which they had obtained from Qubilai. This tallies perfectly with the account in the *DW* to the effect that the number of gold *paizas* that the Polos were given by the Mongol emperor was three. The confusion in the number of *paizas* to which F. W. refers on more than one occasion is spurious; nor can one speak, as she does, of ‘Marco’s possible possession of a golden tablet’: if one was found among his property after his death, he *must* perforce have possessed it when alive.

Finally, the entire argument ensuing from the existence of the *paizas* and an imaginary family dispute, and leading to a large-scale deception on Marco’s part such as the invention of the whole story of his journey in a Genoese prison, is purely speculative. Since this piece of conjecture is also based on an incorrect interpretation of the sources, and on lack of knowledge of other important evidence, we can safely dismiss it as unworthy of serious consideration.

Chapter Fourteen, bearing the somewhat mystifying title of ‘Was it China?’, deals with a number of topics requiring but little comment, since some of its contents have already been discussed in connection with the gold *paizas*. In it, F. W. talks about Qubilai Qan, his court, hunting parties, etc., and touches upon Marco’s supposed activity in China, a topic she will elaborate more fully in the next chapter.

On p. 125, F. W. wonders why the Polos, after seventeen years spent in China, decided to return home not by land – a route already familiar to them – but by the much longer sea route. ‘According to the Prologue’, she writes, ‘Marco Polo, clearly an indefatigable traveller, had just returned from India but was willing to retrace his steps.’ The reason why the Polos had to go by sea (taking advantage of the return to Persia of Argun’s envoys), was that the land journey was not safe at the time owing to the unrest in Central Asia caused by the rebellion of Qubilai’s nephew Qaidu and his supporters (a long and bitter family feud) – unrest which had earlier forced Argun’s mission to retrace its steps, as we have already seen.

128 See the *DW*, p. 77 *et passim*.

On pp. 127-128, F. W. says that it was Marco Polo who was ‘known as „il milione”’, invoking the reference in the 1305 document reproduced by Moule to a ‘*marcus paulo milion*’ as being the first datable occurrence of this nickname.¹²⁹ However, as shown by Gallo, the Marco Polo cited in this document is not our Marco, but his uncle Marco the Elder, who died in 1305-1306.¹³⁰ As indicated by Szczesniak, the nickname Milion(e) pertained to the latter’s line (see above).

On p. 128, F. W. mentions Marco’s Tartar slave Petrus, to whom Marco granted freedom in 1324 (as a provision of his will), and to whom Venetian citizenship was given in 1328.¹³¹ F. W. identifies him with a Petrus Suliman, whose will of 1329 is partially reproduced in Moule.¹³² But Petrus Suliman must be a different person since he belonged to the S. Geremia branch of the Polo family, as specifically stated in the will (‘*de confinio sancti Yemie*’), whereas Marco belonged to the S. Giovanni Grisostomo branch. There is also a Marco of S. Geremia mentioned in the document, hence the confusion.¹³³

While I agree with F. W. that owning a Tartar slave at the time is no indication of a direct link between Marco and the Mongols, I believe – as stated earlier – that the possession of gold *paizas* does indicate a connection.

Of greater import is Chapter Fifteen (‘A significant absence’), in which F. W. handles the other vexing question of Marco Polo’s status in China, which is in turn intimately bound up with that of the absence of any mention of him, his father or uncle in the Chinese sources. Much has been written on the subject, and F. W. reviews some of the past and current theories. She had already broached the problem in Chapter Fourteen (pp. 124-125). I shall deal with both sections together.

In the *DW*, Marco claims to have ruled over the city of Yangiu, i. e. Yang-chou in Chiang-su, for three years.¹³⁴ The wording in the various MSS. varies, and a whole group (V, VB, L and Z) makes no mention of Marco’s office in Yang-chou at all, which as Pelliot says, is curious.¹³⁵ The

129 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-529.

130 See Gallo, ‘Marco Polo, la sua famiglia e il suo libro’, pp. 90-91.

131 See the *DW*, p. 539. Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 158, n. 29.

132 See the *DW*, p. 542.

133 For these two branches of the Polos, see Gallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70, 71-75.

134 *DW*, p. 316; Latham, p. 206. Cf. Benedetto, *op. cit.*, p. 137: ‘*Et meser Marc Pol meisme, celui de cui trate ceste livre, seigneurie ceste cité por trois anz.*’

135 Pelliot, *Notes*, II, p. 876, *s.v.* ‘Yanggiu’. Cf. *DW*, p. 316, n. 2.

French scholar suggested that if Marco Polo was employed in Yang-chou, it may have been in the local Salt Administration.¹³⁶ Prof. Yang Chih-chiu, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the word 'seigneurie' of F should be read 'sejourna' on the basis of the C group of French MSS.¹³⁷ However, as Pelliot has noted, this group remains isolated, and all the other MSS. support the former reading.¹³⁸ Since there were other Venetians (the Vilioni family) in Yang-chou during the Yüan, it is quite likely that Marco spent time there, but certainly not as the governor of the city. F. W. has already pointed out that no mention of either the Polos or the Vilionis (or any other European) has yet been found in the local gazetteers, or in other Yüan sources (pp. 14-15; see above). The 'seigneurie' is, therefore, another exaggeration on the part of Marco.

Prof. Ts'ai Mei-piao states that, as there is no material to substantiate Pelliot's theory, 'it would be more appropriate to assume that he had participated in commercial management in Yangzhou as a merchant'. Ts'ai argues that Marco came from a merchants' family and that if his father and uncle were doing business in China, 'it would have been very natural for Marco to follow them and also engage in trade'. The Polos became rich in China, which would have been impossible if Marco were a minor Yüan official during his seventeen years in that country. From indirect evidence, it appears that he may have been engaged in the lucrative musk trade. Ts'ai's conclusion is that Marco was a *sê-mu* merchant 'engaged in the musk trade in China and various countries around the South China Sea, which may account for why in *Travels* [i. e., in the *DW* – I.R.] Marco only relates what

136 See Pelliot, *loc. cit.* L. Hambis, *op. cit.*, p. viii, writes: 'D'après Pelliot, on peut penser qu'il a probablement été employé dans l'administration de la gabelle, car il donne des renseignements précis sur l'exploitation des salines; c'est à ce titre qu'il aurait été adjoint pendant trois ans au sous-préfet local de Yang-tcheu'. However, it is important to stress the fact that Pelliot never identified Marco Polo with any official in the Salt Administration of Yang-chou, as Hambis' above-mentioned statement, and even more so Olschki's statement in *Marco Polo's Asia* (p. 174, n. 89), may lead one to believe. Pelliot's own reference to *T'oung Pao*, 1928, pp. 164-168 (in *Notes*, II, p. 876), is also somewhat deceptive, insofar as in the *T'oung Pao* article, or rather book-review, he does not touch on the question of the Salt Administration of Yang-chou, which is mentioned again in *Notes*, II, p. 834, s. v. 'Singiu'. All this has created a certain confusion which, as we shall see, has also affected F. W.'s argument.

137 See Yang in Yü Shih-hsiung, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-281 (see above, n. 10). Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 174, n. 89, is of the same opinion.

138 See Pelliot in *T'oung Pao* 25:1928, pp. 164-165.

he had seen or heard in various places in detail, but seldom mentions his own deeds'.

Since Marco claims to have been sent on special missions and as personal envoy of Qubilai on particular occasions (Carajan, i. e. Yün-nan, and India),¹³⁹ Ts'ai further argues that he was no ordinary *sê-mu jen*, but one belonging to the famous *ortog* associations that were very active in China under the Mongols.¹⁴⁰ He writes: 'Among the Semu merchants there was a category of *Wotuo* merchants. *Wotuo* was originated from the Turkic „Ortog”, meaning companion or partner or which can be literally translated as „merchant.” The use of this special transliterated term in Chinese documents indicates that Semu merchants were granted special status. *Wotuo* merchants could be directly entrusted by the Court or the princes to purchase goods in various places, seek profits through trade, or make loans. Although they were not officials of the Court, they had official documents to facilitate their business and provide protection. According to „Robbery Prevention,” the 13th Article of Punishments in the Yuan legal code, *Yuan dianzhang*, when *Wotuo* merchants travelled from one place to another they could obtain official certificates from local governments, which could be exchanged in different places. Commercial or other business they were entrusted with could be regarded as „official duties (*gongshi*).” There were no Chinese merchants with equivalent status. In the third article dealing with household registers in *Yuan dianzhang*, we read that in 1271: „*Wotuo* households” are „merchants engaged in trade under Imperial orders or entrusted by the princes to do so.” This statement basically defines the *Wotuo* merchants, and may explain why Marco Polo called himself a „commissioner.” A comprehensive survey of what was recorded in *Travels* may demonstrate that this interpretation of Marco Polo's status is correct.’¹⁴¹

Prof. Ts'ai's interpretation is both plausible and attractive, and I for one would subscribe to it if it were not for the fact that Marco, when describing his missions on behalf of Qubilai, specifies that they were of a fact-finding, investigative nature, and not once refers to himself as being personally involved in trade or in any commercial activity. In the Prologue, he says that he stayed 'with the great Kaan quite seventeen years, and in all this time he did not cease to go on missions *hither and thither through different countries wherever the lord sent him; and sometimes for private affairs of the same*

139 See the *DW*, pp. 86, 89; Latham, pp. 40-41, 42-43.

140 See below, n. 143.

141 Cai, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-177.

*Master Marc, but by the good will and order of the great Kaan.*¹⁴² The description of places, people, and of natural and man-made resources in China seem certainly to come from a man who has travelled extensively within and outside that country.

Considering all this in the light of Ts'ai's perceptive investigation, I would suggest that Marco's principal role in China was that of a middle-ranking 'inspector' who, because of his lack of knowledge of Chinese, must have confined his activity (in Yang-chou and elsewhere) to the important foreign (*sê-mu*) communities, including of course the *ortog* merchant associations. In fact, he may well have been employed in the General Administration of the *Ortoġ* (established in 1268) and its successors, or in one of the Regional Offices for the Supervision of the *Ortoġ* (first established in 1272). Regrettably, we know very little about the operations of these agencies and even less about their personnel. In Qubilai's time, their heads were invariably Mongols.¹⁴³

Such an activity might easily have been combined with some form of commerce in partnership with his father and uncle, who were no doubt fully engaged in trade, but only as an adjunct to his main work – and it would have certainly benefited from the latter. The two activities, in any event, were not incompatible at the time.¹⁴⁴

I doubt, however, whether Marco's relationship with Qubilai was as close and personal as he wants us to believe, his comments on the subject being probably an expression of his general tendency to enhance his role. But one cannot exclude that the emperor may on occasions have used him as his 'ear and eye', for off the record missions, i. e. to gather intelligence. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the *ortog* merchants were known to engage in spying activity by collecting and reporting information on foreign lands to the government.¹⁴⁵ This is, I think, where Marco would fit in: as an agent of the government under the *ortog* cover and making use of his

142 *DW*, p. 87; Yule, *The Book*, I, p. 30; Latham, p. 41 (where the italicised passage in the *DW* which is found in FB and R is, however, omitted).

143 See the important study by E. Endicott-West, 'Merchant Associations in Yüan China: The *Ortoġ*', *Asia Major* 2:1988, pp. 127-154, esp. p. 133ff.

144 See L. Petech, 'Marco Polo e i dominatori mongoli della Cina', in L. Lanciotti (ed.), *Sviluppi scientifici, prospettive religiose, movimenti rivoluzionari in Cina*, Firenze, 1975, p. 23.

145 See Endicott-West, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

connections with foreign merchants through his family.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, I suspect that as an inspector of foreign activities, he may have had something to do also with foreign religious affairs, given the obvious interest that he shows on the subject of various creeds and of religious practices in China.¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately the above inferences are also speculative, since Marco Polo cannot as yet be identified in the Chinese sources with any foreigner living in China at the time. The problem of identification is a very complex one, and there is hope that his name may still turn up in some form, one day.

F. W. (pp. 134-136) has reviewed some of the technical aspects involved, such as the phonetic transcription into Chinese of the surname Polo and the name Marco, and the alternative transcriptions of Marco's name and those of Nicolò and Maffeo Polo proposed by Olschki.¹⁴⁸ None of the various combinations of syllables (and homophonous characters) has yielded any results so far: their names have not been discovered in the Chinese sources of the Yüan in any of the several possible transcriptions despite the careful sifting of those sources, both historical and literary, which began last century and continues to this day.¹⁴⁹

We may therefore reasonably assume that either Marco is totally ignored by the Chinese sources because he was not important enough to have his name recorded and had no contact with the Chinese educated élite, or that he is mentioned somewhere but under a different name. He himself states that

146 Any future line of enquiry should, in my opinion, proceed in the direction of the *ortog* and of the government agencies supervising it.

147 On this topic see J. Witte, *Das Buch des Marco Polo als Quelle für die Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin: Hutten Verlag, 1916; A. C. Moule, *Christians in China Before the Year 1550*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930, pp. 128-144; Olschki, *op. cit.*, chs. VI and VII.

148 L. Olschki, 'Poh-lo: Une question d'onomatologie chinoise', *Oriens* 3:1950, pp. 183-189.

149 In the last decades, the investigation of Yüan source material has been greatly facilitated by the publication of a number of indices and research tools, such as the already mentioned general index to the *Yüan shih* by Tamura (see above, n. 46). For some of these works, see H.T. Zurndorfer, *China Bibliography. A Reference Guide to Reference Works about China Past & Present, Handbuch der Orientalistik*, B. 10, Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995, pp. 156-157, 282, 329. In I. de Rachewiltz and M. Wang, *Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Works*, 4 vols., Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1988-1996, over 300 works were indexed for a total of ca. 30,000 names. One of the aims of the compilers in carrying out this project was to widen the search for Marco Polo in the Chinese sources of the Yüan period.

he was known at the Mongol court as 'Master Marc Pol' (F: 'mesere Marc Pol'), i. e. Messer Marco Polo (or Paulo).¹⁵⁰ Judging by the way the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mongols dealt with foreign names and titles, Marco's name, as those of his father and uncle, would undoubtedly have also been mongolized.¹⁵¹ Thus, Marco (Mark) – a common name among Nestorian Christians at the time and well attested – would have automatically become Margūs.¹⁵² The surname Polo as such would have become Bol(o/u); in the form Paulo it would have yielded Bavul.¹⁵³ As there was no counterpart in Mongolian of *messer(e)* (in Venetian *misier*), this designation would have been rendered with a phonetic approximation (?)

150 *DW*, p. 87; Latham, p. 41. Cf. Benedetto, *op. cit.*, p. 10. The surname Polo is the Venetian dialect form of the Latin Paul(o), which occurs regularly in the Venetian documents of the time, as well as in some editions of the *DW*. See Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 186 and n. 8.

151 Cf., e. g., forms like Bisqarun and Müskeril for Buscarel(lo) (di Gisolfo), Berenggüd and Virenggüd for Franks, Barans and Varans for France, Ired Barans and Iridivarans for Roi de France, etc. See A. Mostaert et F. W. Cleaves, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Aryun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel, Scripta Mongolica Monograph Series 1*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. 88, 90, 92 (Index Verborum).

152 The reading Margūs in Uighur script is found in line 27 of the *Bičig* of 1272 published by A. Temir. See his *Kirşehir Emiri Caca Oğlu Nur El-Din'in 1272 Tarihli Arapça-Moğolca Varfiyesi (Die Arabisch-Mongolische Stiftungsurkunde von 1272 des Emirs von Kirşehir Caca Oğlu Nur El-Din)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1959, p. 197. Cf. Ligeti, *Monuments préclassiques* 1, p. 271. (Ligeti's transcription of the text of this important document is an improvement on Temir's, but some readings could be improved, e. g., line 15: *qaltugai* is no doubt *qalatuğai*, from *qala-* 'to make changes, to alter'.) Mongolian Margūs corresponds to Turkic Marguz (~ Marquz) and Persian Margūz, all deriving from Syriac Marqūs. Cf. P. Pelliot et L. Hambis, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 236, 238, 247, 281.

153 The surname Polo is transcribed in modern Mongolian in Uighur script as Polo. See Gerelčoğtu (tr.), *Marko Polo-yin jigulčılal-un temdeglel [Marco Polo's Travelogue]*, Qaramören: Arad-un keblel-ün qoriya, 1978. However, Preclassical Mongolian transcribed initial *p* with the letter *b* (e. g., Pülād > Bolod). Paul (Greek Paûlos; Syriac Pāulūs) was transcribed in Chinese as Pao-lu (see below, n. 155), and in the Written Mongolian version of the New Testament it is transcribed as Pavul. See *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Translated Out of the Original Greek into the Mongolian Language* by E. Stallybrass and W. Swan, London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1846, p. 479 *et passim*. The natural outcome in Preclassical Mongolian would be *Bavul or, possibly, *Bağul.

meser, mesir, miser.¹⁵⁴ In Chinese, Mark was transcribed as Ma-hu-ssu, and Paul as Pao-lu, and these would have been the most likely forms to be used for Marco's name and surname.¹⁵⁵ The Chinese had several polite designations and forms of address, but it is futile to discuss which they might have employed since we are dealing with *written* sources in which Marco's name would appear in the above transcriptions, possibly followed by his rank or office title (unfortunately unknown to us). According to the system of official nomenclature found in the Yüan sources, we would expect combinations like Pao-lu (+ title) or Ma-hu-ssu (+ title), although one cannot exclude Pao-lu and Ma-hu-ssu appearing together in this or in the reverse order, with or without title. Another, more remote, possibility is that Marco was also known by a nickname or sobriquet which Qubilai may have given him, as Činggis Qan, for example, had done with Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, calling him Urtu Saqal ('Long Beard'). This nickname is found occasionally in the Chinese sources, transcribed phonetically, and unless we knew that Urtu Saqal = Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai we would not be able to identify the personage.¹⁵⁶

154 Cf. the rendering of 'Roi de France' with Ired Barans and Iridivarans (see above, n. 151). Although the Mongolian had *qan* and *qağan* for 'king', the Mongols still preferred to transcribe the foreign title. Several other examples of this practice can be cited. In the Mongolian version of the *DW*, *messere* is rendered with *abugai* (see Gerelčoğtu, *op. cit.*, p. 28), but this is a comparatively modern usage. For various reasons, I do not think that *messere* would have been rendered with either the Mongolian *nökör* 'companion', or *noyan* 'chief, dignitary' – the latter being primarily a military title. Cf. Olschki, *op. cit.*, p. 101 (where it is not clear whether 'nöyök' is an error for *nökör* or for *noyan*).

155 For Ma-hu-ssu, see Tamura, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 1474b-1475a. The intermediate *erh* or *li* characters to render *-r-* have been dropped, as is often the case, so that Ma-hu-ssu is actually Ma[r]qus. Cf. Pelliot et Hambis, *op. cit.*, p. 247. For earlier Chinese transcriptions of this name, see Moule, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 159; L. Hambis, 'Deux noms chrétiens chez les Tatar', *Journal Asiatique* 241:1953, p. 474; Olschki, 'Poh-lo', p. 188. As for Pao-lu, this transcription (which goes back phonetically to the T'ang) is found in the Yüan work *Ta-Yüan ma-cheng chi [An Account of the Horse Management (Policy) of the Great Yüan]*, in *Kuang-ts'ang-hsüeh-ch'ün ts'ung-shu* (Shanghai, 1916), *chia-lei, i-chi*, p. 28b. On this work see S. Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*. Provo: Brigham Young University, p. 70ff. For the earlier Pao-lu transcription, cf. Moule, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56; Olschki, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.

156 On Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's nickname, see I. de Rachewiltz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 140; *Meng-Ta pei-lu und Hei-Ta shih-lüeh. Chinesische Gesandtenberichte über die frühen Mongolen 1221 und 1237*. Nach Vorarbeiten von Erich Haenisch und Yao Ts'ung-wu. Übersetzt und kommentiert von Peter Olbricht und Elisabeth Pinks. Eingeleitet

The above is largely speculative; it is presented here only to complete the information on the subject given by F. W., and to highlight the complexity of the problem. Regrettably, the Chinese source which should have helped us most in the circumstance, i. e., the *Yüan shih*, is an inferior work, prepared in haste and lacking in essential data in all its sections. Most of the Chinese and Mongolian materials that should have been more fully used for its compilation are now irretrievably lost.¹⁵⁷ And so are, alas, the two earliest prefectural gazetteers of Yang-chou, viz. the anonymous *Yang-chou fu chih* of 1368-1398, and Kao Tsung-pen's work by the same title of 1465-1486.¹⁵⁸ F. W. writes that 'the editions produced in 1542, 1601, 1685, 1819, 1874 and 1947 survive' (p. 135). But Chu Shih-chia, the leading authority on Chinese gazetteers, lists as extant the editions of 1601, 1664, 1675, 1685, 1733, 1806, 1810 and 1874.¹⁵⁹ There is a considerable discrepancy between the two sets of dates which needs explaining. Several of the Ch'ing gazetteers of Yang-chou have been reprinted in the last decades, including the 1733, 1806 and 1810 editions which are absent from F. W.'s list.¹⁶⁰ Her statement on p. 134 that 'even if Polo was a sojourner in Yangzhou, rather than a governor, it is likely that a visitor of exotic foreign origin would have

von Werner Banck, *Asiatische Forschungen* 56, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1980, p. 50.

- 157 Cf. W. Hung, 'The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14:1951, p. 472; Endicott-West, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128. It is to remedy the deficiencies of the *Yüan shih* that K'o Shao-min compiled his *Hsin Yüan shih* [*New History of the Yüan*] in 257 *chüan*. Although adopted as the twenty-fifth *Standard History* (*cheng-shih*) in 1922, it remains a disappointing and largely unutilized work.
- 158 See F. D. M. Dow, *A Study of Chiang-su and Che-chiang Gazetteers of the Ming*, Canberra: Australian National University, 1969, p. 58ff.
- 159 Chu Shih-chia, *Chung-kuo ti-fang-chih tsung-lu* [*A Comprehensive Record of the Gazetteers of China*], Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1958, p. 118. Chu's list and dates are confirmed by all other catalogues except that the date of the 1601 gazetteer (*Yang-chou fu chih*) by Yang Hsün, Hsü Luan *et al.*, Wan-li 29) is occasionally given as 1604 (Wan-li 32) because the latter is the actual date of publication, whereas the former is only the date of the first preface. See, e. g., the *Naikaku Bunko kanshiki bunrei mokuroku* [*The Cabinet Library Catalogue of Chinese Books by Categories*], Tōkyō: Naikaku Bunko, 1956, p. 112.
- 160 See, e. g., the *Catalog of Chung-kuo fang-chih ts'ung-shu* (*Local Gazetteers of China*), Series 1 and Series 2, Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 8, 19. The *Yang-chou t'u-ching* (1806) was reprinted in Yang-chou in 1981.

been included' is spurious and patently wrong, since no member of the definitely exotic Vilioni family, long time residents at Yang-chou, is mentioned in any Yang-chou gazetteer.

About the absence of Marco Polo's name in the Chinese sources and the earlier attempts to identify him with individuals of the Yüan period bearing a similar name (Po-lo), F. W. pointedly notes (pp. 135-136) that Pelliot demonstrated the fallacy of such identifications long ago. This seems to contradict what she says ten pages before when discussing Marco's statement that he spent three years as governor of Yang-chou. There she writes: 'As this claim is not corroborated in Chinese sources Paul Pelliot suggests that Polo was, perhaps, an official in the Salt Administration. Pelliot makes this suggestion partly because a person named in the official history of the Yuan (*Yuan shi*) as Polo or Boluo is listed as Salt Administrator of Yangzhou, and partly because there are so many mentions of salt manufacture and taxation in the *Description of the World*' (p. 124).

In the latter passage F. W. has apparently confused the information contained in Pelliot's review of Charignon's book in *T'oung Pao* (where there is no mention of the Salt Administration, but only of various personages called Po-lo), with that found in Olschki's *Marco Polo's Asia* and in his earlier article 'Poh-lo: une question d'onomatologie chinoise'.¹⁶¹ Pelliot *did not* suggest that Marco Polo may have been an official in the Salt Administration because a Po-lo is listed as Salt Administrator of Yang-chou; it is Olschki who mentions the fact that one of the officials called Po-lo, whom Pelliot had shown (in the above mentioned review) to be a different personage from Marco Polo, held a position of Salt Administrator in Yang-chou. In other words, there is no connection between Pelliot's suggestion that Marco may have had an office in the Salt Administration and the fact that a Mongol official called Po-lo, i. e. Bolo(d), held that post.

The remaining section of Chapter Fifteen (pp. 136-139) is devoted to the study of Marco Polo and the *DW* in China, and to the contributions of Prof. Yang Chih-chiu (discussed earlier) and of other Chinese scholars, which, although impressive, do not demonstrate in F. W.'s opinion that Marco Polo actually sojourned in their country.

In her final chapter ('Conclusions'), F. W. returns to the theme of the Persian guidebook as Marco Polo's major source material and points out

161 See *T'oung Pao* 25:1928, p. 157ff.; Olschki, 'Poh-lo', pp. 183-184; Idem, *Marco Polo's Asia*, p. 174, n. 89. Cf. above, n. 136.

how Rašīd al-Dīn's 'history of China in many instances paralleled Marco Polo's account' (p. 144). She refers to Prof. Franke's comparison of the fourteenth-century Chinese Buddhist chronicle by Nien-ch'ang with Rašīd's history of China, and his inference that there must have existed a thirteenth-century Chinese historical work which was the common source for both Nien-ch'ang and Rašīd's informants. Further, F. W. points out similarities of descriptions of China in Ibn Baṭṭūta's work and in the *DW*, stating that 'it is these similarities that led Herbert Franke to suggest that Marco Polo might, perhaps, have been relying upon a Persian or Arabic guidebook to China filled with the sort of detail that both he and Ibn Baṭṭūta provided' (p. 146). The above statement is an extrapolation from the relevant section of Franke's article which I quoted verbatim at the beginning of the present article. In Franke's paper there is no mention of 'a Persian or Arabic guidebook', nor of Ibn Baṭṭūta, but only of a hypothetical 'Persian source'. Yet, this unwarranted extrapolation provides F. W. with a possible explanation for the similarities of Marco Polo's descriptions of China and those of Rašīd al-Dīn and Ibn Baṭṭūta, and the origin of the data which Marco needed to compile his work: 'If he had, indeed, been provided with documentation by his family whilst in prison, a Persian guidebook in the family's possession, or Persian accounts of the Mongol conquests, could have given him source material' (*ibid.*).

Such an interpretation is not only unsupported by any evidence, but furthermore it can hardly be reconciled with the other theory proposed by F. W. on p. 148, where she suggests that Marco was involved in a family dispute over the 'gold tablets' while writing himself into Nicolò's and Maffeo's story during his stay in the Genoese prison. We have already dealt with this equally fanciful suggestion.

In the end, aware of the inherent weakness of a prolonged argument *ex silentio* and the lack of an alternative solution based on reliable evidence, F. W. reaches what she evidently believes is a plausible compromise. She concedes that Nicolò and Maffeo may have undertaken their journey to Qubilai's court,¹⁶² thereby gaining that vital information which, together with

162 F. W. speaks of the first voyage of Marco's father and uncle to Qaraqorum as 'a credible venture' (p. 148). As I stated earlier, Nicolò and Maffeo did not go to Qaraqorum, but to north China. On p. 149, F. W. writes: 'That Marco Polo himself might not have gone to Karakorum, let alone Peking, seems more likely to me than that he wrote everything he knew from a view of Peking (as John Haeger suggested). The major part of the book is a description of China and beyond. If he had spent years

the knowledge of farther Asia collected by the family commercial houses in the Crimea and Constantinople, and with the additional help of Persian guidebooks, maps, etc., supplied Marco with all he needed to write his book. As for Marco himself, F. W. is of the opinion that he did not set foot much beyond those trading posts (pp. 148-150).

Before evaluating F. W.'s book and her conclusion, I wish to make a few remarks on some formal matters, such as the system of transcription, the critical apparatus and the bibliography.

The first thing that will strike the general reader is F. W.'s odd spelling of Činggis Qan as Qinghis Khan, whose name appears on the genealogical table of 'The Great Khans' just before the Introduction. In view of the now current use of the *Pinyin* system of transcription for Chinese, he or she will probably think that 'Qinghis' is the accepted new spelling of the conqueror's name as in the case of the Qing (Wade-Giles: Ch'ing) Dynasty.¹⁶³ This is not so. There are several accepted transcriptions of this name, such as Genghis, Gengis, Chingis, Chinggis and Činggis. The *Pinyin* transcription of the Chinese form of the name is Chengjisi.¹⁶⁴ F. W.'s Qinghis is a purely arbitrary form for which there is no historical or linguistic justification; it is, in fact, a total aberration. Činggis' second son was called Čagatai, which F. W. in the same table correctly transcribes as Chaghatai. Now, the initial č (*ch*) of this name has exactly the same sound as the initial consonant of

in Peking, a more detailed account of that city alone by its first Italian, or indeed European, visitor would have been sufficiently exotic to attract attention'. F. W. refers to John W. Haeger's interesting paper 'Marco Polo in China? Problems with Internal Evidence' which appeared in the *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 14:1978, pp. 22-30. After examining various descriptions of places and events in the *DW* and the difficulty to trace Marco's itineraries in China, Haeger reaches the conclusion that the Polos may have not travelled in China much beyond Peking, and that Marco could have assembled his information on the other localities he describes during his stay in that city. As in the previously cited case of Dr. Clunas, Prof. Yang Chih-chiu has written a detailed review of Haeger's paper, refuting his conclusion. Yang's review has been reprinted in Yü Shih-hsiung, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-84, as well as in Yang's *Yüan shih san lun* (see above, n. 10), pp. 115-126. Since Haeger does not deny that Marco went to China, I shall not discuss here Yang's refutation, which I find on the whole convincing.

163 See above, n. 10.

164 See, e. g., *Chung-kuo ta pai-k'o-ch'üan-shu. Chung-kuo li-shih* [*The Great Chinese Encyclopaedia. Chinese History*], *Yüan shih* [*Yüan History*], Peking, Shanghai: Chung-kuo ta pai-k'o-ch'üan-shu ch'u-pan-shê, 1985, p. 21: 'Chengjisihan'.

Činggis. If F. W. writes Qinghis for Činggis, one would expect Qaghatai for Čağatai.

As for Qan, one can write Qan or Khan indifferently, provided one is consistent in rendering the Mongolian *q* with either *q* or *kh*. F. W. regularly writes Qubilai Khan which is incorrect. It should be either Qubilai Qan or Khubilai Khan (or, better still, Qağan/Khaghan).

Like German, Mongolian distinguishes between *o* and *ö*, and *u* and *ü*. F. W. has Ögödei, Güyüg and Öljeitü, but Mongke (for Möngke) and Ariq-boke (for Ariq-böke).

Whereas long vowels are not usually noted in Mongolian, they are in Persian and Arabic. To simplify, one may choose to ignore them, in which case one avoids them altogether. F. W. is quite inconsistent in her practice, writing Rašīd al-Dīn but Pulad (for Pūlād), Benaketi (for Benāketi), Ilkhān and Ilkan (for Īlkhān or Ilkhan).¹⁶⁵

Turning to Western names, there is also considerable inconsistency and incorrectness of spelling: Giovanni Baptisto Ramusio and Giovanni Battista R., Pegelotti (for Pegolotti), Odoric and Ordoric (of Pordenone), Niccolo (for Niccolò or Nicolo/Nicolò), etc. There is no justification for retaining incorrect forms when they are known to be incorrect, or for inconsistency, notwithstanding the cautionary 'Note on the text' that F. W. has prefaced to her book.

The Notes and the Bibliography provide references to much of the source material used by F. W., but these references are often incorrect, beginning with two of the most important editions and translations of the *DW*, i. e. the Yule-Cordier and the Moule-Pelliot editions, the titles of which are in both cases wrong (see, below, the list of *errata*).¹⁶⁶ Sometimes the references are not *ad rem* (e. g., n. 32 on p. 167), or incomplete (e. g., n. 19 on p. 160, and nn. 3 and 4 on p. 167).¹⁶⁷ The high number of misprints, especially in foreign

165 In the present article I use the form Il-Khan throughout instead of the less familiar Īl-Xān.

166 As J.J.L. Duyvendak has pointed out in *Young Pao* 34:1938, p. 336, to call the *DW* 'The Travels of Marco Polo', as Sir E. Denison Ross and R. Latham have done, is actually a misnomer. F. W.'s mistitling of the Yule-Cordier edition is no doubt due to the influence of the Ross and Latham translations.

167 On p. 135, F. W. mentions an extant 1542 gazetteer of Yang-chou but does not indicate the source for this extremely interesting piece of news, the importance of which she is obviously unaware of. In n. 19 on p. 160, she refers to '*Cihai* dictionary' *tout court*, presuming that the general reader knows all about it. Even assuming one

names and words, further spoil the presentation of the material. Moreover, in both the Notes and the Bibliography, F. W. omits in most cases to mention the translator of a book and whether the work is a reprint, and she fails to distinguish between author and editor, so that, for instance, Luigi Foscolo Benedetto invariably appears as the author of *Il Milione*!

In her Acknowledgments, F. W. hopes that the readers of her book might go back to the 'venerable sources', such as the works of scholars like Yule, Pelliot, Moule, etc., where she thinks they will find much of interest. Following her sound advice, I did go back to these sources and to many more besides. The present review is the outcome of this 'return to the sources' which I found most instructive. I regret to say that F. W.'s book falls short of the standard of scholarship that one would expect in a work of this kind. Her book can only be described as deceptive, both in relation to the author and to the public at large. Questions are posed that, in the majority of cases, have already been answered satisfactorily. Knowing this, and in most instances providing the correct, or most probably correct, answer herself, she has then chosen either to play down that answer, or to ignore it, or even to reject it outright without sufficient reason — her only aim being to salvage her thesis at all costs.¹⁶⁸ As we have seen, her attempt is unprofessional; she is poorly equipped in the basic tools of the trade, i. e. adequate linguistic competence and research methodology (particularly evident in her treatment of the Argun embassy episode); and her major arguments cannot withstand close scrutiny.¹⁶⁹ Her conclusion fails to consider all the evidence supporting Marco Polo's credibility, evidence which is provided first of all by the *DW* itself. The amount of information on many aspects of exotic cultures is so staggering that generations of

knows what the *Cihai* is, there are several editions (with very different contents) of this dictionary published in China as well as in Taiwan. Which one is meant?

168 This attitude is also noticeable in the Notes. See, for instance, note 14 on p. 163, where commenting on Marco Polo's comparison of Hang-chou (Quinsai) to Venice, she writes: 'However, he only did so in the ever-helpful Toledo version [i. e., the Z MS. — I. R.] and one Venetian manuscript', implying that we can dismiss this testimony as not worthy of consideration.

169 In the present review, I have restricted my remarks to topics with which I am familiar, and have purposely refrained from commenting on F. W.'s questionable statements concerning matters within the domain of Romance languages and literatures, such as her remark that French at the end of the thirteenth century had not yet 'fully developed' (p. 49). I leave such criticism to the specialists in the field.

scholars could furnish the *DW* with endless annotations – witness what has already been done in this regard by Yule, Cordier and Pelliot. Their erudite commentaries have opened the gate, as it were, for a continuing investigation of this work, which, because of its eclectic character, has still so much to reveal.¹⁷⁰ No Persian Baedeker or ‘family stories’ could have supplied a fraction of the data scattered throughout it. This is an entirely different work from Pegolotti's, as anyone who takes the trouble of reading both books can easily ascertain. Then, there is the indirect, compelling evidence of the Chinese, Persian and Western sources which have been brought to bear in the present paper. *Pace* F. W., Marco Polo was in China, with or without the benefit of the doubt.

Errata (This list does not claim to be complete, especially with regard to the Notes and the Bibliography. For these two sections, it provides only a sample of common errors and omissions)

- p. x (The Great Khans) *et passim*: for Qinghis read Chinggis or Chingis
 – : for Batu (d. 1225) read Batu (d. 1255)
 – : for Mongke read Möngke
 – : for Ariq-boke read Ariq-böke
 p. 1, l. 6 from bottom: for Baptisto read Battista (*cf. pp. 41, 45*)
 p. 5, l. 11 from bottom *et passim*: for Niccolo read Niccolò or Nicolo or Nicolò
 p. 6, l. 15 *et passim*: for Khan read Khaghan
 p. 7, l. 7 from bottom *et passim*: for Ilkhān read Īlkhān or Ilkhan
 p. 13, l. 15 (twice) *et passim*: for Pegelotti read Pegolotti
 p. 19, l. 4: for *Historiae* read *historiale*
 p. 32, l. 11: for Ilkan read Īlkhān or Ilkhan
 p. 32, l. 10 from bottom: delete a
 p. 41, l. 5 from bottom: for de Milione read del Milione
 p. 61, l. 14 from bottom: for Jin read Liao
 p. 61, l. 3 from bottom: for *han-baliq* read *Ĥan-baliq*
 p. 62, l. 7 from bottom: for secondary read primary
 p. 79, l. 6: for pelmeni read pel'meni or pelemeni

¹⁷⁰ Paul Pelliot unfortunately could not complete his *Notes*, and much research in depth still remains to be done. As an example of what the *DW* still yields, and the way such information should be dealt with, see A. Mostaert's masterly article ‘Le mot *Natigay/Nacigay* chez Marco Polo’, in *Oriente Poliano*, pp. 95-101.

- p. 100, ll. 9 and 8 from bottom: for Khitan read Jurchen
 p. 101, l. 7: for 1354 read 1345
 p. 102, l. 3: for *tres* read *très*
 – : for *çomme* read *comme*
 p. 109, l. 10: for Ordoric read Odoric
 p. 115, l. 15 from bottom: for argoli read argali
 p. 118, l. 8 *et passim*: for *laisser-passer* read *laissez-passer*
 p. 130, l. 17 from bottom: for Trebisong read Trebisond
 p. 134, l. 16: for late eighteenth- read early nineteenth (1806)
 p. 135, l. 12 from bottom: for Rashid read Rashīd (*idem on p. 144, l. 13 from bottom*)
 – : for Poulad read Pūlād
 p. 135, l. 7 from bottom: for Matthews read Mathews' (*idem on p. 168, l. 6*)
 p. 136, l. 11 from bottom: for Qypcaa read Qypçaq
 p. 136, l. 10 from bottom: for (Puliaer) read (Pu-li-a-êr) or (Buliaer)
 p. 144, l. 2 from bottom: for Bernaketi read Benāketī
 p. 145, l. 16: for Benaketi read Benāketī
 p. 153, l. 3 *et passim*: for *The Travels of Marco Polo* read *The Book of Sir Marco Polo*
 p. 153, l. 14: for *Discovery* read *Description*
 p. 153, l. 15 *et passim*: for *Marco Polo: The Travels* read *The Travels of Marco Polo*
 p. 154, ll. 3-4 *et passim*: for *Marco Polo: The Travels* read *Marco Polo. The Description of the World*
 p. 154, l. 12: for Mongole read mongol (*idem on p. 173, l. 10*)
 p. 154, l. 12 from bottom: for *centario* read *centenario* (*idem on p. 171, l. 6 from bottom*)
 – : for *nascità* read *nascita* (*idem on p. 171, l. 6 from bottom*)
 p. 154, l. 13 from bottom: for ed read e (*idem on p. 171, l. 7 from bottom*)
 p. 156, l. 15: for Tübingen read Tübingen
 p. 156, l. 17: for Runiciman read Runciman (*idem on p. 173, l. 11 from bottom*)
 p. 157, l. 8 from bottom *et passim*: for *Conquest* read *Invasion*
 p. 158, l. 9 *et passim*: for Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, *Il Milione* read Luigi Foscolo Benedetto (ed.), *Marco Polo. Il Milione*
 p. 158, l. 9 from bottom: before Manuscripts insert *The First Latin Edition*, (*idem on p. 172, l. 11*)

- p. 160, l. 12: for *edifiantes* read *édifiantes*
- p. 164, l. 5 from bottom: for Chen Yuan read Ch'en Yüan
- p. 165, l. 12 *et passim*: for J.A.G. Boyle read J.A. Boyle
- p. 168, l. 3 *et passim*: before Une question insert Poh-lo:
- p. 168, ll. 16-18: *The reference to Franke's article should be rewritten as follows: 'Europa in der ostasiatischen Geschichtsschreibung des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts', Saeculum 2 (Freiburg-München), pp. 65-75. (Idem on p. 171.)*
- p. 168, l. 6 from bottom: for 'Did Marco Polo get to China?' read 'The Explorer's Track'
- p. 169, l. 11: for Renaud read Renaudot
- p. 169, l. 13: for Mahoumetans read Mahometans
- p. 170, l. 12 from bottom: for deu read dou
- p. 173, l. 9: for 1927 read 1928
- p. 173, l. 5 from bottom: for Aburey read Aubrey
- p. 174, l. 21: for Xu read Yu

Addendum

In a letter to me dated 20 January 1997, Prof. Herbert Franke wrote: 'On pp. 82-83 of F. W.'s book she tries to make a point by saying that according to Marco Polo the walls of Ta-tu were white, which she considers wrong. In my opinion Marco Polo could have been right. White was the holy colour of the Mongols (and not red, as for the Chinese). And the highest building in late 13th century Ta-tu was the famous „White Stüpa". The walls of buildings in e. g. Ulan Bator and other places are usually white. I think that it may have been the same in Marco Polo's time.'