



# Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West

*Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Amilcare Iannucci*

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Few figures from history evoke such vivid Orientalist associations as Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant, explorer, and writer whose accounts of the .Far East. sparked literary and cultural imaginations. The essays in *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West* challenge what many scholars perceived to be an opposition of .East. and .West. in Polo's writings. These writers argue that Marco Polo's experiences along the Silk Road should instead be considered a fertile interaction of cultural exchange.

The volume begins with detailed studies of Marco Polo's narrative in its many medieval forms (including French, Italian, and Latin versions). They place the text in its material and generic contexts, and situate Marco Polo's account within the conventions of travel literature and manuscript illumination. Other essays consider the appropriation of Marco Polo's narrative in adaptations, translation, and cinematic art. The concluding section presents historiographic and poetic accounts of the place of Marco Polo in the context of a global world literature.

By considering the production and reception of *The Travels*, this collection lays the groundwork for new histories of world literature written from the perspective of cultural, economic, and linguistic exchange, rather than conquest and conflict.

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