

MARRIAGE WEALTH AND DEATH OF MARC POL ≠ MARCO POLO  
 line only through the elder Marco, the family fortunes were quickly gathered into the hands of Marco the traveller, and of his daughter Fantina. For, some time after his return from the East, Marco married Donata, daughter of Vitale Badoer, by whom he had three daughters, Fantina, Bellela, and Moreta. Professor ORLANDINI was not led by the study of legal documents to admire Marco's character and he asks us, not unfairly, to observe that in his will (d.18, pl. 2-5) there is no bequest to the cousins whose debts to him had been so severely exacted; nothing, apart from conventional religious bequests, but to his wife and daughters. It is only right to say that the will was made just before his death, when he may have been unable to resist the pressure which his wife and eldest daughter may have put upon him.

The great traveller died at the age of about seventy on the 8 January 1323/4—*In nome de dio, 1323 die 8 çener mori miser Marco polo.*<sup>1</sup> The will is dated the 9 January. This is quite possible, as the clerical notary would begin the day at sunset; but it does show that Marco's will was made at the last moment, and enable us to date his death within a few hours, after sunset on Sunday, 8 January 1324. His undying fame rests solely and securely on his great book, well named *The Description of the World*, in which he gave at least some news about almost every part of the Asiatic Continent, the islands of Japan, Sumatra, Ceylon, Socotra, and the east coast of Africa, revealing a vast new world to his astonished and incredulous hearers. There is good reason to believe that Marco was buried, as he wished to be, in the Church of San Lorenzo, perhaps in or near the tomb of his father there; but the Church has been rebuilt and there is nothing to show the position of the grave.<sup>2</sup>

Marco Polo's will (d.18) gives little indication of the fabulous wealth which has been attributed to him, though it is rather difficult to form a just idea of the value of money at the time. At a time when a knight's fee in England was £20, ought we to call a man who could bequeath 2000 pounds of Venetian money in remission of debts and in other charity fabulously rich? To his widow he left an annuity of eight Venetian pounds grossi (which cannot have represented a very large capital sum), and the rest of his property to be divided between his three daughters. The inventory of the goods which were thus to be divided is actually preserved and has been published by ORLANDINI (d.69, p. 554), and the value of the things amounted to 306l. 15s. 2d. of Venetian grossi. According to YULE, writing in 1870, the Venetian pound or *lira dei grossi* (*grossorum*) was equal to 20 *soldi* or

<sup>1</sup> Or. p. 62, d. 69. See p. 558 below.

<sup>2</sup> See the Article by Dr R. KRAUTHEIMER in volume III.