Bento De Goes Encyclopedia Article

Bento De Goes

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1562-1607

Portuguese Jesuit who discovered that Cathay and China were the same place. Born in the Azores, Goes was first a soldier before joining the Jesuits in the Portuguese province of Goa, India, where he was befriended by the Mogul emperor Akbar. Goes became intrigued by the question of whether Cathay, as described by Marco Polo (1254-1324), was the same as the land of China that had recently been visited by Italian missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). In 1602-1607, he traveled northward from India to the Silk Road, which he followed east into China. He died at the Great Wall near Beijing, his question answered.