

**Eyewitness Accounts of ‘the Indies’ in the Later Medieval
West: Reading, Reception, and Re-use (c. 1300-1500)**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Despite increased mercantile and missionary contact between the Latin West and India and China between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, scholars have often noted that Western Europe's knowledge of India, as judged by geographical texts from the period, changed surprisingly little during this time. This thesis employs some of the methodologies of reception studies in order to investigate the role played by first-hand travel accounts in the construction and change of concepts of the Indies during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It investigates in particular the reception in Italy, France and England of the information about the area known as India or the 'three Indies' presented in the texts produced by two Italian travellers to the East: the *Divisament dou monde* of the Venetian merchant Marco Polo (c. 1298), and the *Relatio* of the Franciscan missionary Odorico da Pordenone (1330).

The thesis falls into three distinct parts. In the first section, I contextualise the project with a broad survey of the Latin European ideas of India in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and with an outline of the travellers' journeys and their contexts. The second part of the thesis provides a broad overview of the circumstances of diffusion of the two travel accounts in England, France and Italy over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, before conducting a detailed, manuscript-based investigation of the ways in which the two accounts of India were approached by their early readers. This investigation focuses principally upon the presentation and possible modes of reception of the texts' geographical and ethnographic details and relies heavily on the evidence of presentation, paratext and the traces of reading present in the physical texts of the accounts.

The third and final part of the thesis considers the evidence of the reception of elements from first-hand travel accounts in other textual and cartographic productions. Proceeding on the basis of case studies, it demonstrates that first-hand accounts of 'the Indies' were used by the authors and compilers of cosmographical texts in this period in a variety of ways. It suggests, however, that the manner and context of the deployment of elements from such accounts often tended to assimilate these with, rather than distinguish them from, the writings of accepted authorities. This section also contrasts the way that details from travel accounts were re-used in texts with the way the same information was handled in the composition of maps. Finally, by analysis of the ways eyewitness accounts of the Indies were re-used in certain ambiguous and comic texts produced in this period, the thesis sheds light on an underexplored aspect of the reception both of eyewitness information and of the genres in which it appeared. The appendices contain tables presenting information relative to the manuscripts discussed that support the arguments presented in section two.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ii
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Contents</i>	iv
<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations and frequently cited works</i>	x
<i>Conventions: Manuscript References; Notes on Editions and Referencing</i> <i>Conventions; Note on Transcription; Note on Foreign Place Names</i>	xii
INTRODUCTION	1
1 Context	1
2 Scope of study	6
3 Reception studies: methodologies	7
4 The methodology of this thesis	10
PART I: INDIA AND THE WEST IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES: CONCEPTS AND CONTACTS	
CHAPTER 1: THE WORLD, THE INDIES AND GEOGRAPHY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES	15
1.1 Geography and the world	15
1.1.1 Modes of writing about the world in the later medieval West	18
1.1.1.1 Compendia and encyclopaedias	19
1.1.1.2 Histories	21
1.1.1.3 Academic cosmographies	22
1.1.1.4 Travel writing	24
1.2 Textual contexts of writing about the Indies around 1300	26
1.2.1 India in the <i>descriptions orbis</i>	27
1.2.1.1 Honorius Augustodunensis	28
1.2.1.2 Vincent de Beauvais	29
1.2.1.3 Gossouin de Metz	31
1.2.2 Legendary India	34
1.2.2.1 The legends of Alexander the Great	35
1.2.2.2 Scripture, St Thomas, and the three Indies	37
1.2.2.3 Prester John	39
1.2.2.4 The legendary melting-pot	40
1.3 Conclusion	41
CHAPTER 2: ENVOYS, MISSIONARIES, MERCHANTS: EAST-WEST CONTACTS AND TRAVELS IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES	45
2.1 Introduction: the routes of traders and missionaries	45
2.2 The papacy, the mendicants and the medieval missions in Asia: principles and practice	46
2.2.1 The friars and the Indian missions	52

2.2.2	Jordanus Catalani and the Dominican mission in India	53
2.2.3	Odorico da Pordenone, the <i>Relatio</i> , and the eastern missions	57
2.2.4	Missionaries in India and the communication of information	61
2.3	Mercantile travel in India and Marco Polo's <i>Book</i>	65
2.3.1	Marco Polo's travels	68
2.4	The decline of mercantile and missionary travel.....	72
PART II: RECEPTION: THE EVIDENCE OF THE PHYSICAL TEXTS		
CHAPTER 3: MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR PATTERNS IN THE DIFFUSION AND		
	READERSHIP OF MARCO'S <i>BOOK</i> AND ODORICO'S <i>RELATIO</i>	79
3.1	Introduction	79
3.2	Marco Polo's <i>Book</i>	80
3.2.1	The Italian States	82
3.2.1.1	The fourteenth century: vernacular MSS; Latin MSS	82
3.2.1.2	The fifteenth century: vernacular MSS; Latin MSS	85
3.2.2	The Francophone continent.....	89
3.2.2.1	The fourteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	89
3.2.2.2	The fifteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	91
3.2.3	England	94
3.2.3.1	The fourteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	94
3.2.3.2	The fifteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	95
3.3	Odorico da Pordenone's <i>Relatio</i>	97
3.3.1	The Italian States.....	99
3.3.1.1	The fourteenth century: vernacular MSS; Latin MSS	100
3.3.1.2	The fifteenth century: vernacular MSS; Latin MSS	102
3.3.2	The Francophone continent.....	104
3.3.2.1	The fourteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	103
3.3.2.2	The fifteenth century: French MSS; Latin MSS.....	106
3.3.3	England	107
3.3.3.1	The fourteenth century: Latin MSS	107
3.3.3.2	The fifteenth century: Latin MSS	109
3.4	Conclusion.....	110
CHAPTER 4: READING INDIAN GEOGRAPHY IN MARCO'S <i>BOOK</i> AND ODORICO'S		
	<i>RELATIO</i> : THE EVIDENCE OF MANUSCRIPTS.....	112
4.1	Introduction	112
4.2	Geography and itinerary in the <i>Book</i> and the <i>Relatio</i>	112
4.3	Analysis of the presentation and annotation of geographical	
	information.....	120
4.3.1	Marco Polo's <i>Book</i>	122
4.3.1.1	The Italian States.....	122
4.3.1.2	The Francophone continent.....	127
4.3.1.3	England	129
4.3.2	Odorico da Pordenone's <i>Relatio</i>	130
4.3.2.1	The Italian States.....	130
4.3.2.2	The Francophone continent.....	134

4.3.2.3 England	136
4.4 Conclusion	139
CHAPTER 5: READING INDIAN ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE <i>BOOK</i> AND THE <i>RELATIO</i> :	
THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE	143
5.1 Introduction: ethnographic writing in the later Middle Ages.....	143
5.2 Reading ethnographic writing: in-text guidance	146
5.3 Reading ethnographic writing: the guidance of prologues and rubrics....	149
5.4 Marginal paratext and readers' annotation.....	154
5.4.1 Marco Polo's <i>Book</i>	155
5.4.1.1 The Italian States.....	155
5.4.1.2 The Francophone continent.....	159
5.4.1.3 England	160
5.4.2 Odorico's <i>Relatio</i>	163
5.4.2.1 The Italian States.....	163
5.4.2.2 The Francophone continent.....	165
5.4.2.3 England	166
5.5 Conclusion	170
PART III: RECEPTION: THE EVIDENCE OF RE-USE	
CHAPTER 6: FROM TRAVEL WRITING TO GEOGRAPHY?	
6.1 Introduction	175
6.2 Travellers' Indies in cosmological and geographical writings.....	176
6.2.1 Geographical writings 1300-1500: broad trends.....	176
6.2.2 Re-use in context: encyclopaedic texts in Italy.....	179
6.2.2.1 Antonio Pucci, <i>Libro di varie storie</i>	179
6.2.2.2 Domenico Silvestri, <i>De insulis et earum</i> <i>proprietatibus</i>	184
6.2.2.3 Giovanni da Fontana, <i>Liber de omnibus rebus</i> <i>naturalibus</i>	188
6.2.3 Re-use in context: encyclopaedic texts on the Francophone continent.....	195
6.2.3.1 The <i>Livre des merveilles du monde</i> and the <i>De figura</i> <i>et imagine mundi ad Renatum</i>	197
6.2.4 Re-use in context: English <i>descriptiones orbis</i>	202
6.2.4.1 John of Tynemouth, <i>Historia aurea</i>	202
6.3 Travellers' Indies in fifteenth-century Italian cartography.....	206
6.3.1 Context	206
6.3.2 Addressing conflict between Ptolemaic cosmology and eyewitness accounts of the East	209
6.3.3 The identification of the ancient with the modern: Sri Lanka.....	213
6.3.4 The function of the Indies in cartography	217
6.4 Conclusion: overview of modes of re-use.....	220
Figures 1-8	223

CHAPTER 7: IMAGINATIVE GEOGRAPHY, TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNTS OF THE INDIES, AND PROBLEMS OF GENERIC EXPECTATION.....	231
7.1 Introduction.....	231
7.2 Fictions of eastern travel and generic expectation.....	235
7.2.1 <i>The Book of Sir John Mandeville</i>	238
7.2.2 Jacopo da Sanseverino, <i>Libro piccolo di meraviglie</i>	245
7.2.3 Fra Cipolla's 'orazione'.....	250
7.2.4 <i>The Recollections</i> of Friar Odorico.....	254
7.3 Conclusion.....	260
CONCLUSION.....	262
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1.....	272
Figure 1 Simplified <i>stemma</i> for Marco's <i>Book</i>	272
Figure 2 Simplified <i>stemma</i> for Odorico's <i>Relatio</i>	272
Appendix 2 Maps.....	273
Map 1 Land and sea routes between Europe and Asia c. 1300.....	273
Map 2 South Asian locations and medieval toponyms.....	274
Map 3 South East Asian locations and medieval toponyms.....	275
Appendix 3 Tables.....	276
3.1 Notes to Tables 1 and 2.....	276
3.1.1 Categorisation conventions.....	277
3.1.1.1 Size.....	277
3.1.1.2 Date.....	278
3.1.1.3 Support.....	278
3.1.1.4 Script: <i>Italy; France; England</i>	279
3.1.1.5 Decoration.....	283
3.1.1.6 Companion pieces.....	284
3.1.1.7 Ownership evidence.....	284
Table 1 Marco's <i>Book</i> : codicological summary.....	285
Table 2 Odorico's <i>Relatio</i> : codicological summary.....	290
3.2 Notes to Tables 3-8.....	293
3.2.1 The sample of manuscripts examined.....	293
Table 3 Representativeness of MSS of Marco's <i>Book</i> examined.....	293
Table 4 Representativeness of MSS of Odorico's <i>Relatio</i> examined.....	293
3.2.2 Paratext and annotation.....	294
3.2.2.1 Chapter headers.....	294
3.2.2.2 Marginalia: <i>Marginal paratext; readers' annotations</i>	294
Table 5 Marco Polo's Indies: presentation and traces of reading.....	297
Table 6 Odorico's Indies: presentation and traces of reading...	301

Table 7 Marco's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading.....	304
Table 8 Odorico's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading.....	308
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED IN TEXT	311
Manuscripts cited in text and tables.....	311
Editions, translations and published facsimiles	313
Secondary sources.....	318

List of Figures

Figure 1 Claudius Ptolemy, World Map (Rome, 1478)	223
Figure 2 Fra Mauro, Mappamundi (Murano, 1450)	224
Figure 3 Fra Mauro's Indies	225
Figure 4 Giovanni Leardo, World Map, 1452/3	226
Figure 5 Giovanni Leardo's India and Indian Ocean	227
Figure 6 The 'Genoese' World Map	228
Figure 7 Southern and South East Asia on the Genoese World Map	229
Figure 8 Henricus Martellus Germanus, World Map	230

List of tables (in text)

Table A Surviving manuscripts of Marco's <i>Book</i> from England, France and Italy: Summary information	81
Table B Surviving manuscripts of Odorico's <i>Relatio</i> from England, France and Italy: Summary information	99

Abbreviations and frequently cited works

- AF* *Analecta franciscana* (Quaracci: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1885-)
- ANLM:SMSF* *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie: Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*
- BBB* *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della terra santa e dell'oriente francescano*, ed. by Girolamo Golubovich, 5 vols (Quaracchi: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1906-23)
- BLQC* *Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogues*
- Cathay* *Cathay and the Way Thither being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*, ed. by Henry Yule, 2nd edn, rev. by Henri Cordier, 4 vols, Hakluyt Society, 33, 37-38, 41 (London: Hakluyt, 1913-16; repr. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998)
- CRM* C. Iulius Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen (Berlin: Nicolai, 1864)
- Divisament* Marco Polo, *Divisament dou monde*, in *Milione. Le Divisament dou monde: Il Milione nelle redazioni toscana e franco-italiana*, ed. by Gabriella Ronchi (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1982), pp. 305-662
- Etym* Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911)
- HN* Pliny the Elder, [*Historia naturalis*] *Natural History*, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham and others, 10 vols (London: Heinemann, 1938-63)
- JMEMS* *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*
- Milione* Marco Polo, *Milione*, in *Milione. Le Divisament dou monde: Il Milione nelle redazioni toscana e franco-italiana*, ed. by Gabriella Ronchi (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1982), pp. 3-302
- MOFPH* *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*
- OM* *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, ed. by John Henry Bridges, 3 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1900)
- PL* *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. by J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844-1864)
- PN* *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. by Richard Hakluyt, 12 vols (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1903-05; repr. of London: Bishop, Newberie and Barker, 1599-1600)

- RHCDA* *Receuil des Histoires des Croisades: Documents Arméniens*, 2 vols (Farnborough: Gregg International, 1967; facs. repr. of Paris: Imprimerie Impériale 1869-1906)
- SF* *Sinica franciscana: Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, 6 vols (Quaracci: Ad claras aquas, 1929-61), ed. by Anastasius van den Wyngaert and others
- SM* Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum quadruplex sive Speculum maius*, 4 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1964-65; repr. of Douai: Bellerie 1624)
- Yule-Cordier *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition*, 3 vols bound as 2 (New York: Dover Reprints, 1993; repr. of *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, ed. and trans. by Henry Yule, rev. by Henri Cordier, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1920))

Conventions

Manuscript References

Throughout this thesis manuscripts are referred to by short codes derived from their full shelfmark. A full list of shelfmarks of manuscripts referred to in the thesis and appendices and a key to the short codes can be found in the Bibliography.

Note on Editions and Referencing Conventions

This thesis employs a wide variety of editions of Marco Polo's *Book* (as signalled in the footnotes), but my base texts for Marco Polo are the Franco-Italian *Divisament dou monde* and the Tuscan *Milione* as edited by Ronchi (see abbreviations). Due to the variety of accessible editions and translations of the *Book*, however, I refer to the text, for ease of reference, by book number (if appropriate), chapter number, then page number. My base text for Odorico's *Relatio* is the Latin edition of Wyngaert (printed in *SF*, I), though other editions are employed as appropriate to the particular version discussed. For the sake of consistency I have employed the same system of reference to chapter and page in relation to this text. When referring to classical, patristic, and certain medieval sources available in multiple editions (for example, Pliny, Solinus, Isidore) I follow the convention of referencing book, chapter and paragraph. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all other references are to page numbers.

Note on Transcription

In transcribing from manuscripts (usually marginalia) and printed editions I have expanded contractions silently except in cases where there is any reasonable doubt as to the correct expansion, or cases of cropping, rubbing or other damage to the manuscript. In cases of damage or other problems but where the reading is reasonably certain: for example, a contraction mark is missing or the very end or beginning of a word is cropped but the meaning is clear, I have expanded using [brackets]. In cases of doubt, my suggested expansion is placed in brackets, with a question mark: [?]. A question mark alone in brackets indicates unknown missing sections. I do not emend marginal notes. Certain emendations have been necessary in my few transcriptions from sixteenth-century editions. In these cases, the emended text is given in [brackets], and the emendation is explained in a note. I have distinguished between 'u' and 'v', and have silently modernised punctuation.

Note on Foreign Place Names

I have used accepted and commonly-employed modern English variants of Indian place names where these are available. For lesser-known places, the versions employed in the *Times Atlas of the World* have been employed. For medieval Arabic versions of place names, I have generally used the variants given in Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, supplemented for Northern India by Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*. I have reproduced diacritics as far as is possible within certain unavoidable typological limits and have made no attempt to standardise the use of diacritics between these different sources. Renditions of South Asian and Far Eastern toponyms in medieval European languages are notoriously variable, and I

have chosen to reflect that variability in the discussion by not standardising their usages between authors or indeed between variants of the same text. Modern equivalents are given in parentheses at the start of the discussion of any given place, as well as a standard medieval version if deemed necessary. All unfamiliar medieval western toponyms for Southern and South East Asia referred to in this thesis are presented on the maps in Appendix 2.

Introduction

1 Context

This thesis arises from a problem in the history of geography. Scholars who have examined the history of western perceptions of the East in the later Middle Ages have, since the early twentieth century, exhibited a certain amount of confusion and frustration with what is often perceived and characterised as a stagnant period in the conception and representation of the East in general and India in particular. Irrespective of the widespread copying and popularity of the works of travellers and pseudo-travellers to the East throughout this time, scholars have been frustrated to note the apparently limited impact of these works upon contemporary conceptions and representations of the world and its peoples. G. H. T. Kimble lamented in 1938 that the writings of missionary friars who travelled in Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were '[u]nfortunately [...] not fully appreciated by the educated men of their day' and concluded that the impact of Marco Polo's writings upon geographical theory and cartography was 'paltry' in the fourteenth century and 'scarcely more than this' in the fifteenth.¹ Nearly thirty years later, Margaret Hodgen in her ground-breaking work on anthropological history commented that Marco's *Book* was 'strange to say [...] all but forgotten in the west during the centuries that followed [its appearance]'.² The problem has been expressed in different forms by a number of scholars since, sometimes with specific reference to Marco Polo, and sometimes with more general relevance.³ Thus Edgar Polomé, in an article that examines the representation of India in late-medieval encyclopaedic texts, concludes that these are 'particularly ignorant of the realities of India [...] and renewed contact

¹ George H.T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1938), pp. 134-35, 144-45.

² Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), p. 103.

³ John Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), pp. 131-35. See for example John Larner's judgement that impact of Marco Polo's book was largely confined to general historical information about the Mongols: *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New York: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 132.

with the Orient has apparently not helped'.⁴ Donald Lach, in two chapters that deal with the travellers of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, identifies this as a problem relating particularly to perceptions of India, claiming that even in the late fifteenth century '[m]uch that was fabulous, particularly about India, continued to detract from the significant advances that had been made in the acquisition of a truer picture'.⁵ Scholars have made such judgements with reason: there is undoubtedly a curious problem relating to the flow of information from the accounts of travel in the East that were widely popular in the later Middle Ages into influential encyclopaedic, cosmological, and marvellous texts relating to India and the East. Thus as late the first quarter of the fifteenth century, the French cardinal Pierre d'Ailly was able to produce a cosmological compendium that made no reference to an East well-known to mercantile and missionary travellers of the preceding century (see 6.2.1). Certain aspects of this problem of information flow have been addressed by scholars in very different ways over the last century. C. R. Beazley's monumental detailed survey, *The Dawn of Modern Geography* concentrates on the knowledge demonstrated by the writers of travel accounts themselves, placing very little weight on its reception in other works.⁶ Federico Pullè in 1932 published a comprehensive study of the presentation of India in classical and medieval cartography, the second volume of which contained detailed descriptions of medieval maps and noted influences upon these from eyewitness accounts.⁷ Works of scholarship and works of synthesis have been produced that either study the impact of an individual travel account on the West's understanding of the East, provide a broader survey of the production, context and influence of travel accounts,

⁴ Edgar C. Polomé, 'The Vision of India in Medieval Encyclopaedias', in *Interpreting Texts from the Middle Ages: The Ring of Words in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Ulrich Goebel and David Lee (Lewiston: Mellen, 1994), pp. 257-79 (p. 278).

⁵ Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1: *The Age of Discovery* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 71.

⁶ Charles Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography: A History of Exploration and Geographical Science*, 3 vols (London: Frowde, 1897-1908), III: 1260-1420, 15-381. Discussion of reception is confined to Marino Sanuto, Francesco Pegolotti and *Mandeville's Travels*: 312-32, and to certain Catalan maps: pp. 522-28.

⁷ Federico Pullè, *La Cartografia antica dell'India*, 2 vols (Florence: Carnesecchi, 1932), 1. Map studies tend to focus on the valuable work of the identification of sources for specific areas or for a whole map. In addition to Pullè's study, see also John Kirtland Wright, *The Leardo Map of the World: 1452 or 1453* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), in which the notes tend to focus on source-study.

or examine the impact of western explorations.⁸ Amongst the broad survey works, the comprehensive, detailed and well-referenced monograph of Folker Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China* stands out as the essential source.⁹ In dealing with the question of the reception of travel accounts of the East by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writers and cartographers Reichert provides a broad survey of instances of re-use of material taken from travel accounts.¹⁰

Significant amongst works that deal with individual travel accounts are the studies of Rosemary Tzanaki and Consuelo Wager Dutschke. Tzanaki's study, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences: A Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville (1371-1550)*, examines the reception of this very popular late-medieval work, which itself constitutes a re-use of travel accounts, by looking both at the marginalia in certain of its manuscripts, its binding in manuscripts with other works, and instances of re-use in geographical, romance and historical genres.¹¹ For her study 'Francesco Pipino and the Manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Travels*', an important source for the present thesis, Dutschke catalogued and described all surviving manuscripts of Marco's *Book*, discussed the marginalia of Francesco Pipino's Latin translation, and produced a discursive handlist of citations of the *Book* in works from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.¹² A small number of studies have been produced that examine the interaction between the genres of travel account, geography and cartography.¹³ Nathalie Bouloux's careful and detailed monograph

⁸ Larner, *Marco Polo*, pp. 115, 124, 126, 127, 130-32 and 133-50; John Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book*, pp. 135-77; Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), includes chapters that discuss the representation of India in later medieval travel accounts, but, with the exception of *Mandeville's Travels*, does not consider the reception of these accounts; Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, I, esp. pp. 37-71.

⁹ Folker Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China: Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter* (Thorbecke: Sigmaringen, 1992).

¹⁰ Reichert, *Begegnungen*, pp. 197-226.

¹¹ Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences: A Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville (1371-1550)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

¹² Consuelo Wager Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino and the Manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Travels*', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1993). Dutschke's discussion of selected annotated manuscripts, concentrating particularly on Pipino's Latin translation is at pp. 63-100, and the discursive handlist at pp. 1162-348: 'Francesco Pipino'.

¹³ The key early study is Leonardo Olschki, *Storia letteraria delle scoperte geografiche: Studi e ricerche* (Florence: Olschki, 1937). More recently, see the collection of essays, none of which deal in great detail with India or the Far East, in *Columbeis, V = Relazioni di viaggio e conoscenza del mondo fra Medioevo e Umanesimo*, Atti del V Convegno internazionale di studi dell'Associazione per il Medioevo e l'Umanesimo Latini, Genova, 12-15 dicembre 1991, ed. by S. Pittaluga (Genoa: Dipartimento di archeologia, filologia classica e loro tradizioni, 1993), and, for a survey of current

Culture et savoirs géographiques en Italie au XIV^e siècle (2002) discusses the genres of geographical writing in fourteenth-century Italy as well as examining attempts to incorporate the testimony of itineraries and eyewitness accounts into cartographic productions and geographical writings. Bouloux, however, whilst discussing the attitude of certain Italian pre-humanist scholars towards travellers in the East such as those with whom this thesis is concerned, the Franciscan missionary Odorico da Pordenone (d. 1331) and the Venetian merchant Marco Polo (d.1324), does not include analysis of the use of such eastern material amongst her detailed case-studies.¹⁴ Due, then, either to the general nature of the approaches taken in the broader historical overviews or conversely to the specificity of single-text approaches, no scholar has as yet undertaken a study that examines the impact of eyewitness travel accounts on representations of India.

The specific lacuna addressed by this thesis is, in consequence, the impact of eyewitness accounts of India — or, as the region is termed in many cases, the ‘three Indies’ — upon later-medieval representations of India.¹⁵ Specifically, I shall address the problem of information flow between later-medieval travel accounts and later-medieval geographical works by drawing a connecting line between two

directions in research, Simonetta Ballo Alagna, ‘Recenti orientamenti degli studi geografico-storici sulle esplorazioni e sull’immagine del mondo nei secoli XV e XVI’, *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Rendiconti - Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Ser. 9, 7 (1996), 311-22.

¹⁴ Nathalie Bouloux, *Culture et savoirs géographiques en Italie au XIV^e siècle*, *Terrarum orbis*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 170-75. Bouloux’s text includes a detailed case-study of the use of an eyewitness account of the Canaries in the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Domenico Bandini and Domenico Silvestri: pp. 249-66.

¹⁵ I do not propose to engage in this thesis with the vexed question of the factual nature or otherwise of the geographical and ethnographic elements in the travel accounts. However, I do not subscribe to the point of view elaborated by Frances Wood, that Marco Polo is unlikely to have travelled further than Soldaia, but instead employed Persian and Mongolian histories and guidebooks to complete the parts of his work pertaining to India and China: Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?* (Boulder: Westview, 1996). Many of the problems that lead Wood to her radical conclusion (such as the appearance in Marco’s text of stories and place name forms that occur in the later account of Rashīd-ud-Din), as well as peculiarities such as Marco’s and Odorico’s near-identical accounts of euthanasia-cannibalism (attributed to Indonesia), cenocephali, and self-sacrifice before idols, can be explained by the simple fact that travellers, in the medieval period as now, reported not just what they have seen, but what they hear from fellow-travellers, guides and translators, and, furthermore, what they (or indeed their amanuenses) think that they ought to have seen but didn’t. Information and myths that circulate in this way can thus become closely tied to places, and indeed part of the field of generic expectations with which readers approach accounts of such places. See Anila Verghese on the suggestion that generic expectations of Indian travel writing came to demand a description of *saṭī*: Verghese, ‘Saṭī: Practice and Representation’ in her *Archaeology, Art and Religion: New Perspectives on Vijayanagara* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press: 2000), pp. 115-40 (p. 116). W. Arens has suggested that a similar generic expectation led to repeated sixteenth-century accounts of cannibalism amongst the indigenous population of the Americas: *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 31.

aspects of the medieval reception of travel accounts of the East: the way they were read and their re-use. My methodology for approaching this task has been threefold. Firstly, I have examined a sample of manuscripts of the two most widely diffused first-hand accounts of India for the way they present ‘the Indies’, and for evidence of how they were read. Secondly, I have conducted case-studies of the re-use of this same material in the composition and compilation of geographical and cartographic works produced between 1300 and 1500. Thirdly and finally, I have examined selected imaginative and comic texts that make use of the structure and content of accounts of travels in India in order to shed light on the status and function of these itineraries outside the ambit of geography and cartography.

This study, then, places questions of reception at the heart of its methodology in order to revisit the problem of information flow between eyewitness accounts of the Indies and other, particularly geographical, types of writing. Rather than reproducing a narrative centred on the composition of texts, it interrogates this narrative by questioning the contexts in which these texts were read, how they were read, and what was done with the information relating to the Indies that they contained. One effect of this focus has been to bring into consideration not only the perceptions of India of thinkers and writers of texts, but also to ask what function accounts of the Indies performed for consumers of texts. This focus makes it possible to challenge in a nuanced way ‘great narratives’ that attempt to explain the function of the idea — or in fact the construct — of India or the Indies in medieval European thought.¹⁶ Whether such narratives conclude, as did Wright in 1925, that for the medieval West ‘India was above all else a land of marvels’, or as Andrea Rossi-Reder did in 2002 that medieval western perceptions of a monstrous India were part of an ‘incipient colonial or even a proto-colonial discourse to assert Western superiority and justification for dominance’, such narratives and explanations attempt to assign a univalent meaning or single function to this

¹⁶ Postcolonial studies uses the term ‘great narratives’ or equivalents to refer to works of scholarship that proceed from a positivist point of view, their authors plotting a linear narrative of progress. I employ the term to refer to any historical narrative that attempts to explain historical, social, cultural and literary developments over a long period of time by the imposition of a single governing idea. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography’, in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 197-221. James D. Sidaway discusses the role of postcolonial approaches in disrupting ‘familiar and often-taken-for-granted geographical narratives’ in ‘Postcolonial Geographies: Survey-Explore-Review’, in *Postcolonial Geographies*, ed. by Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 11-28 (p. 27).

construct.¹⁷ This reception-centred thesis examines instead some of the variety of functions that constructs of India and the Indies performed for reading communities in the medieval West, to what extent these change over time and under the influence of travellers' accounts.

2 Scope of study

Reasons of practicability and space have obliged me to place certain limits upon this study. I have confined my close analysis of the manuscript presentation and traces of reading in travel accounts to the sections presented as the Indies in Marco Polo's *Book* (1298) and Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio* (1330). I have not, therefore, carried out this type of analysis on other texts that also contain important travellers' accounts of India, such as Jordanus Catalani's *Mirabilia descripta* (c. 1328) and Niccolò Conti's description of India as recounted in Book IV of Poggio Bracciolini's *De varietate fortunae* (1448). This is due in part to reasons of space, in part to the very limited circle of diffusion of Jordanus' text, which survives only in a single manuscript, and in part to the known confined circle of diffusion of Niccolò's account which, published by Poggio in 1448 and dedicated to Pope Nicholas V, circulated with humanist texts amongst humanist scholars.¹⁸ I have chosen to focus principally on the reception of the geographical and ethnographic elements of the texts. The first of these is important because of its relationship to the question at the heart of this thesis: that of the relationship between the travel accounts and the representation of the Indies. The second of these is important not only because of the strong focus placed on descriptions of peoples in geographical writings concerning India (see 1.2), but also due to the considerable attention paid by the travellers' texts to the habits and customs of alien peoples. This attention, coupled with, generally, a correspondingly high number of marginal annotations relating to peoples in

¹⁷ John Kirtland Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades: A Study in the History of Medieval Science and Tradition in Western Europe*, American Geographical Society Research Ser. 15 (New York: AGS, 1925), p. 274; Andrea Rossi-Reder, 'Wonders of the Beast: India in Classical and Medieval Literature', in *Marvels, Monsters and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. by Timothy S. Jones and David A. Springer (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 53-66 (p. 66).

¹⁸ A brief review of known travellers in India between 1300 and 1500 and the texts that they produced appears in Chapter 3.

annotated manuscripts (see 5.4), indicates that the *mores* and customs of foreign peoples were areas of particular fascination for medieval readers.

Principally for reasons of space and viability, I confine my discussion of the readership, reception and re-use of Marco's and Odorico's account to the Italian states (in practice, primarily the northern states), the Francophone continent (the area corresponding with modern France and later-medieval Burgundy), and England. For ease of reading, and conciseness, I often (principally in the discursive text) refer to the former two areas as 'Italy' and 'France', but these terms should be understood here as interchangeable with the 'Italian states' and 'the Francophone continent'.

My chosen time-frame for the examination of the reception of these texts and their impact upon the representation of India is the period from 1300 to 1500. This choice of period allows me to examine the impact of these texts both in their original contexts and beyond these. It allows me to look, for example, at the interaction of information drawn from eyewitness travel accounts with that provided in Ptolemy's *Geographia* (translated into Latin in 1406), and with that provided by Poggio's *India* (1448). It allows me to follow trends in reception into a period when an increased interest in geography and cartography is attested by increased manuscript production and, later, the innovation of printing of geographical texts and maps. The study stops just short, however, of considering the arrival of the new wave of information concerning mainland India initiated by the return from India to Portugal of Vasco da Gama in 1499.

3 Reception studies: methodologies

In this thesis I make use of some of the methodologies that, over the past four decades, have been developed for reception studies and for the crucial growing body of scholarship on the history of reading.¹⁹ Rather than bringing these to bear, as has traditionally been the case, on literary texts, I instead employ them in order to illuminate problems in the history of the representation and comprehension of

¹⁹ The work of Rhiannon Daniels in particular has helped me to identify reception studies methodologies particularly suitable to medieval studies, to work out my own approach, and with terminology. See Rhiannon J. Daniels, 'Reading and Meaning: The Reception of Boccaccio's *Teseida*, *Decameron* and *De mulieribus claris* to 1520' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2003), in particular pp. 4-8, 17, 120-32.

space.²⁰ Reception studies is, however, a general term for a range of sometimes rather loosely connected theories and methodologies, in the words of Susan Suleiman, ‘not one field but many, not a single widely-trodden path but a multiplicity of crisscrossing, often divergent tracks that cover a vast area of the critical landscape’. Its methodologies, then, have in common only their theoretical position that meaning is made not in any given text itself, but in the reader’s encounter with it and their consequent focus on the afterlife, rather than the composition, of texts.²¹ Given the broad range of methodologies that have been grouped under the often-interchangeable terms reception studies, reader-response studies, and audience-oriented criticism, I do not propose to give a full account of the field in this introduction.²² Instead, I will focus on trends in the field that have relevance to medievalists and to non-literary texts.

Beginning with the premise that meaning is made in the interaction between text and reader, reception and reader-response critics and theorists have worked to plot and to explain this process using a daunting range of sometimes highly divergent theories and methods. German and American scholars in the 1970s in particular argued about the extent to which any individual’s reading of a text was guided by the text itself (specifically by indeterminacies left in it by its author), by reading communities determining interpretative conventions, and by the

²⁰ Scholars who work on readers and reading identify themselves in different ways. The largely German-speaking group whose key figures included Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser termed their work *Rezeptionstheorie* or *Rezeptionästhetik*. Vincent B. Leitch specifically terms the American audience-centred school of study, including practitioners such as Norman Holland and Stanley Fish, ‘reader-response criticism’: Vincent B. Leitch, ‘Reader-Response Criticism’, in *Readers and Reading*, ed. by Andrew Bennett (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 32-63. Susan Suleiman groups reception theory and reader-response criticism under the general header of ‘audience-oriented criticism’: ‘Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism’, in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, ed. by Susan Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1980]), pp. 3-45. In this thesis, I use ‘reception studies’ as a broad umbrella that may incorporate any aspect of study of the afterlife of a textual product, from the physical text in its manuscript or printed incarnation to its reading, appropriation, misappropriation, and re-use in other contexts by contemporary and later readers.

²¹ Suleiman, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

²² The most recent source collection is Bennett, *Readers and Reading*, and the best short survey that of Vincent B. Leitch in the same collection. See also Tompkins’ survey of the place of reader-response criticism and theory in the history of western aesthetics, with a lucid account of its debts to previous forms of scholarship and its faults: ‘The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response’, in *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* ed. by Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 201-32.

idiosyncratic personality of the reader.²³ Since the late 1980s, however, scholars working in the field of literary history have taken issue with certain of the premises of these approaches. Robert Darnton and Roger Chartier have pointed out that, despite their stated premise that meaning is made between text and reader, reception theorists, phenomenologists and reader-response critics often took no account of the text in its physical, material form of manuscript or printed book, but assumed a direct relationship between a usually unhistoricised reader and the words written by a text's author.²⁴ Also problematic for Darnton, Chartier and other commentators was the assumption in much of the earlier work that reading is a transhistorical activity. Discussions of 'the reader' in the work, for example, of Wolfgang Iser, assumed 'not a specific, historically situated individual but a transhistorical mind whose activities are, at least formally, everywhere the same'.²⁵ Finally, some commentators and practitioners have noted that, whereas the reception theorists and reader-response critics were willing to posit any number of types of real and hypothetical reader, the hegemony of the concept of the text, that is, of 'textual unity or wholeness' was never challenged in reception and reader-response theory.²⁶ As John Dagenais has pointed out, the concept of the unity of the text itself is, for medievalists, a pervasive fiction.²⁷ In a historical period when manuscript variation of texts is the rule rather than the exception, and when encyclopaedism and the formation of compendia of extracts were popular forms of literary activity, the concepts of textual identity, textual unity, and textual wholeness are seriously challenged.

The criticisms of Chartier, Darnton, Suleiman, and Dagenais oblige historians of reading and literary historians to formulate and practise new and better ways of approaching the reading and reception of texts over time. Darnton and Chartier have

²³ Leading exponents of each of these points of view were Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish and Jonathan Culler, and Norman Holland respectively. See Leitch, 'Reader-Response Criticism', pp. 53, 38-39, 40-44

²⁴ Roger Chartier, 'Labourers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader' in *Readers and Reading*, ed. by Bennett (Longman: London, 1995), pp. 132-49 (p. 138); Robert Darnton, 'History of Reading', in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. by Peter Burke, 2nd edn (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2001), pp. 156-86 (pp. 175-78).

²⁵ Suleiman, 'Introduction', p. 25.

²⁶ Suleiman, 'Introduction', p. 40.

²⁷ John Dagenais, 'That Bothersome Residue: Towards a Theory of the Physical Text', in *Vox intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991) pp. 246-59 (pp. 252-56).

already set out programmes for approach to this study that are seminal reading for any scholar working in the field of reception.²⁸ Robert Darnton, in ‘History of Reading’, set out five ways in which a social history of reading should be approached.²⁹ Two of the ways he lists are concerned explicitly with the physical text: the study of the form of the book, and the study of the reading habits of individuals using marginalia and other notes. Roger Chartier’s methodological proposals concur in many respects with those of Darnton, but are more radical. In addition to asserting that the physical format of a text influences the way it is read and suggesting that reading history can be approached from the perspective of changes in the formats of books, he insists that, because reading is an ephemeral activity, historical readings can never fully be recovered.³⁰ In a position that bears similarities to that of certain North American reading theorists, that interpretative communities of readers govern reading practice and interpretative strategy, Chartier also suggests that not only is reading ‘not always and everywhere the same’, but that communities of readers throughout history and across space read in accordance with specific communal conventions and interpretative strategies.³¹

4 The methodology of this thesis

The work of historians of reading, including Chartier and Darnton in particular, is foundational for this thesis.³² However, differences in my area of study and point of

²⁸Chartier’s ‘Labourers and Voyagers’ and Darnton’s ‘History of Reading’ are referenced above. See also in particular amongst Chartier’s many publications *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the 14th and 18th Centuries*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

²⁹Briefly stated, these are: studying representations of reading; studying how reading was learnt; studying autobiographical accounts of reading and traces such as marginalia; using literary theory; using analytical bibliography and studying the physical layout of the book: Robert Darnton, ‘History of Reading’, pp. 168-76.

³⁰Chartier, ‘Labourers and Voyagers’, p. 33.

³¹See in particular Chartier, ‘Communities of Readers’, in *The Order of Books*, pp. 1-23.

³²The list of sources in this field is too long to be mentioned here so I give selected references only. For an update on recent work in the field, see the editorial note appended to Darnton’s ‘History of Reading’, pp. 178-80. Useful on the relationship between changes in script and layout and changes in reading practices is Paul Saenger, ‘Reading in the Later Middle Ages’, in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier and trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 120-48. For the history of reading in medieval England, see Andrew Taylor, ‘Into his Secret Chamber...’, in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 41-61. Foundational on reading culture particularly with reference to study is Mary Carruthers, *The*

focus have led me to certain differences in premises and methodology. Chartier and Darnton focus explicitly on the history of reading for its own sake. By contrast, scholars who have worked as pioneering practitioners in the field of reception and reader-response studies have generally done so with respect to the reception histories of individual authors or texts.³³ I, however, focus neither upon the history of reading in general nor upon the reception history of an individual work or author. Instead, working across traditional textual and disciplinary boundaries, I use the evidence of the physical text to examine the reading practices brought to bear on accounts of a specific place in one genre: travel writing. I then employ the traditional techniques of textual criticism in order to examine the modes of reception of information from these same accounts into other genres: geographical, cartographical and imaginative.

My use of the evidence of the physical texts includes both an investigation of the way the physical layout of manuscripts relates to readers' expectations and directs their responses, and an examination of the traces of reading left by readers, such as readers' attestations and marginal annotations. I work from the basis that reading is a 'sense-making activity', in which a reader may use a number of strategies such as selection, compilation, and analogy in order to make an alien and incomprehensible text comprehensible and familiar.³⁴ This sense-making activity leaves some material traces that can be treated as evidence for its processes. The tools and conventions that helped and directed late-medieval readers in this sense-making activity may be analysed. These include textual items, termed 'paratexts' by Gérard Genette, such as chapter divisions and titles ('intertitles', according to Genette) or other rubrication, scribal finding or explanatory notes, tables of contents, and chapter lists.³⁵ Evidence that bears witness to the fruits of this sense-making activity is more limited, however. Its physical evidence is largely confined to

Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³³ See for example Sylvia Huot, *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*; Rhiannon Daniels, 'Reading and Meaning'.

³⁴ Suleiman, 'Introduction', pp. 22-23; Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. by David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), pp. 212-28 (p. 218).

³⁵ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1 ('paratexts'); p. 294 ('intertitles'). For further explanation of paratexts and intertitles (normally termed here 'chapter headers' for simplicity) see Appendix 3.

readerly marginal annotation and to comments and attestations written at the ends of texts. Though I accept, with Chartier, that reading is an ephemeral activity, no instance of which can ever fully be recreated, I contend that its partial traces may and should nevertheless be investigated, and may legitimately be used in an attempt to describe, analyse and account for the sense-making activities of historical reading communities. Every marginalium has an intended audience, even if that intended audience is the reading and writing self, and it is in this light that the readers' marginalia examined in this thesis are treated.³⁶ This being the case, marginalia may be analysed as may any other form of communication, as evidence for the reception, comprehension and assimilation of ideas.³⁷

In my examination of the re-use of elements from eyewitness accounts of India in other texts and genres I use the methods of traditional textual criticism in order to establish the level of assimilation of the ideas from eyewitness accounts with geographical notions that derive from other sources, and to assess the evidence of the impact that this information may have had on readers' horizons of expectations with regard to writing that concerned the Indies.³⁸ As Umberto Eco has pointed out, medieval patterns of re-use (*'reimpiego'*) include a wide range of literary techniques. Intertextual elements may be authoritatively redeployed in changed contexts without intrinsic alteration; slight modifications may be made to render these elements fit for a new context; substantial modifications may be made to tailor them to a new purpose; a complete remodelling, knowingly or unwittingly done on the part of the

³⁶ For a fourteenth-century account of a reader's marginalia, the intended audience of which is the annotating reader himself, see Petrarch's *Secretum meum*. In this imagined dialogue between the poet and St. Augustine, Augustinus suggests to Franciscus that 'when, from your eager perusal, [something] touches you, print alongside the useful *sententiae* certain notes by means of which you may hold down, as if with hooks, the memories that wish to fly away' ('cum intenta [aliquid] tibi ex lectione contigerit, imprime sententiis utilibus [...] certas notas quibus velut uncis memoria volentes abire contineas'): Petrarch, *Secretum meum*, ed. by Enrico Carrara (Milan: Ricciardi, 1955), p. 106.

³⁷ This observation is particularly relevant for the medieval period, in which most book owners owned few books, which were thus likely to be read repeatedly. Christian Bec's study of books belonging to Florentine professionals according to early-fifteenth-century inventories shows how most of the book owners identified in this way owned fewer than six books. Bec, *Les Livres des Florentins (1413-1608)*, Biblioteca di "Lettere Italiane": Studi e Testi 29 (Florence: Olschki, 1984), p. 21.

³⁸ The useful notion of the *horizon of expectations* is taken from Hans Robert Jauss. Put briefly and simply, Jauss contends that a reader approaches any given text with a set of expectations arising from reading of material in genres that he/she identifies as similar. The reader then both judges the new work against the criteria established by the old *and* modifies his/her expectations in the light of the new work. The same terms and processes may apply for place as do for genre. See Hans Robert Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1982]), pp. 3-45 (pp. 21-22).

medieval compiler, may lead to a total change in function and meaning.³⁹ An examination of the techniques employed in the re-use of elements from travel accounts enables me, then, to assess the levels of trust placed in eyewitness information, to look for evidence of the manipulation of travel account sources, or of the horizon of expectation in order to render them harmonious with one another and, finally, to shed light upon what Adams and Barker have called ‘[a] much more elusive [...] aspect of reception’, that is, the ‘way that [...] ideas, and even the actual wording of those ideas, are picked up and used with or without acknowledgement by later writers for a variety of purposes, some having nothing to do with the original intention of the author and publisher’.⁴⁰ Using this combination of methodologies I hope to demonstrate that the distinctive pattern of re-use of information concerning the Indies taken from later-medieval travel accounts is closely related to the way the physical texts of these accounts were presented and read.

³⁹ Umberto Eco’s sliding scale of modes of *reimpiego* in the Middle Ages ranges from extensive use (‘uso prolungato’) of authorities to ‘taking-up’ (i.e., of outsize clothes; ‘risvolto’) through ‘mending’ (‘rammendo’), degrees of patchworking (‘rattoppo’, ‘rabberciatura’, and ‘patchwork’). Eco also makes use of Levi-Strauss’s concept of ‘bricolage’, including it as a separate category, before discussing the notion of inadvertant making-anew (‘restauro innavertito e continuo’), and the radical alterations necessary for conscious recycling or recasting (‘riciclaggio o rifusione’): Eco, ‘Riflessioni sulle tecniche di citazione nel medioevo’, in [n. ed.] *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell’alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, 46, 2 vols (Spoleto: SSCISAM, 1999), I, 461-84 (p. 462). There are also similarities with Mikhail Bakhtin’s discussion of ‘varying degrees of of alienation or assimilation of another’s quoted word’, in ‘From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse’ in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist and trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), pp. 41-83 (p. 68).

⁴⁰ Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, ‘A New Model for the Study of the Book’, in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*, The Clark Lectures 1986-1987, ed. by Nicolas Barker (London: British Library, 1993), pp. 5-43 (p. 31).

Part I

**India and the West in the Late Middle Ages: Concepts
and Contacts**

Chapter 1: The World, the Indies, and Geography in the Later Middle Ages

1.1 Geography and the world

As a genre and descriptive term, *geography* was not in general usage in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹ Scholars who work on the knowledge of the earth in the medieval period have consequently always had to deal with a terminological problem: how do we discuss writing about the world in an era without a historically appropriate and specific term? In connection with this precise difficulty, Bernard Chevalier poses the conundrum that ‘it is the paradox of the historian [...] to be obliged to use the concepts of his contemporaries to make himself understood, at the same time as never failing to remember that they are strangers to the past that he explores’.² Thus Natalia Lozovsky attempts to sidestep the problem of the mismatch between medieval and modern terminologies by prefacing her discussion of geographical knowledge in the early Middle Ages with the observation that ‘even though geographical knowledge lacked a definition or a disciplinary status and functioned in various contexts, it still possessed a certain self sufficiency as a subject’.³ This attitude to the term geography with respect to the Middle Ages is in fact traceable to Charles Beazley’s statement on the subject at the turn of the nineteenth century:

¹ The term *geography*, though known earlier than the fifteenth century, nevertheless appears sufficiently unfamiliar to require definition (‘geographiam hoc est terre descriptionem’) when Ptolemy’s *Geographia* is first translated by Jacopo Angelo da Scarperia into Latin (c. 1406). Jacopo chooses not to use this unfamiliar word himself, instead replacing it with the more familiar *Cosmographia*: Claudius Ptolemy, *Cosmographia*, facsimile reprint of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb lat 277 (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation: 1983), fol. 2v.

² ‘c’est le paradoxe de l’historien [...] d’être obligé pour se faire entendre d’utiliser les concepts de ses contemporains, tout en ne cessant de rappeler qu’ils sont étrangers au passé qu’il explore’: Bernard Chevalier, ‘Introduction: Espace vécu, mesuré, imaginé’, *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales*, 3 (1997), 7-16 (p. 9).

The word geography [...] is not very common in the writers of the Middle Ages; the term geometry (applied to one part of the Quadrivium) was used in exactly the same sense, but with the express inclusion of what is now called ethnology or anthropo-geography; and among other medieval expressions for this study we have the common *De natura rerum*, *De natura locorum*, *De mensura orbis terrae*, the equally common *Cosmographia* and the rarer *Cosmimetria*.⁴

This quotation, although it has been used by several scholars since Beazley to preface discussions of geographical thought in the Middle Ages, requires further elaboration.⁵ In fact, there is far more variety in terminology for writing about the world than even this statement allows for: it does not, for example include *chorographia* or chorography, strictly speaking meaning regional geography, but used by Pomponius Mela (fl. AD 43 but repopularised in late-fourteenth-century Italy) as meaning the description of the earth.⁶ The statement of equivalence between ‘this study’ plus ethnology, moreover, and the other expressions listed conceals significant areas of non-equivalence between modern conceptions of geography and the types of writing about the world that Beazley enumerates. The lack of equivalence is in fact not just between medieval and modern terminology, but between medieval and modern modes of thought concerning the world. Chevalier has put this problem succinctly. He points out that our mode of thought concerning the world is governed by an understanding of space that is the legacy of modern science and philosophy, a concept of ‘an ideal environment: homogenous, empty, infinite and infinitely divisible’.⁷ The fundamental difference between medieval and modern approaches here is that ‘philosophical and scientific inquiry in the Middle Ages bears on the world, not on space’.⁸ In the period under discussion in this thesis, then, notion of the world — the *mundus* — encompassed not just the physical earth, but also its cosmological situation, its elements, the nature of man, and all the

³ Natalia Lozovsky, *The Earth is our Book, Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca400-1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 3.

⁴ Charles Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography II: 900-1260*, 515.

⁵ For example, Beazley’s statement is quoted by Margaret Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, p. 71, and echoes through Rosemary Tzanaki’s explanation of the term in *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, p. 83.

⁶ Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia libri tres*, ed. by Piergiorgio Parroni, *Storia e letteratura*, 166 (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1984).

⁷ ‘Il s’agit bien d’un milieu idéal, homogène, vide, infini e indéfiniment divisible’: Chevalier, ‘Introduction: Espace vécu, mesuré, imaginé’, p. 8.

⁸ ‘L’interrogation philosophique et scientifique au Moyen Age porte sur le monde, non sur l’espace’: Chevalier, ‘Introduction: Espace vécu, mesuré, imaginé’, p. 9.

world's physical and metaphysical attributes. This inclusive sense of the term *mundus* is exemplified in significant and influential medieval cosmographical texts like the *Imago mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis or its vernacularisation, the *Image du monde* of Gossouin de Metz. Neither the *Imago mundi* nor the *Image du monde* are limited to a discussion or description of the physical world in the sense of the *orbis terrarum* (*oekumene* or known world). Honorius's *Imago mundi* begins with an introduction on the shape of the world ('De forma mundi'), then moves on to outline five ways of understanding the creation of the world ('De creatione mundi'), then the four elements ('De elementis'). The description of the earth in its modern geographical sense begins in the work's sixth section, 'De forma terre', from which Honorius proceeds to a discussion of the world's five zones, then to paradise, to its four rivers, and then to a description of the earth's countries, beginning with India.⁹ Gossouin de Metz's French vernacular reworking of Honorius's text, the *Image du monde*, embodies an image of the world yet further removed from modern conceptions of geography. The first section of this multipart work begins with a discussion of God, good and evil, moves through the reason for the creation, mankind and free will, knowledge and learning and the seven liberal arts. Discussion of the shape of the world and the four elements begins at Chapter 9, towards the end of the first section. A detailed *descriptio orbis terrarum* then begins the second section of the work.¹⁰ It is evident from this structural arrangement that the world according to Gossouin is as much spiritual and conceptual as it is physical.

Equally, however, the *mundus* could sometimes denote a section of the earth smaller and more specific than that denoted by the modern word 'world'. The word *mundus* was sometimes used synonymously with the Greek word *oekumene* and its Latin translation *orbis terrarum*, with the meaning 'known world'. Medieval *mappaemundi* of Macrobian and mixed types, including famous examples such as the Hereford world map claimed to represent the *mundus* or *orbis terrarum*, yet there is no implication in these words that such maps represented the entire round globe of the earth. In these instances, the *mundus* is synonymous only with the *orbis terrarum* or *oekumene*, thought since antiquity to encompass only a limited portion of the

⁹Honorius Augustodunensis *Imago Mundi*, ed. by Valerie Flint, *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 49 (1982), 1-153 (pp. 49-53: references are to pages throughout).

globe, the remainder of which was sometimes theorised as water, sometimes as land, and sometimes as including three further island-like *orbes terrarum*, separated from one another and from our *orbis* by impassable ocean streams.¹¹ Writers of larger works who included a descriptive *mappamundi* in their compendia included Brunetto Latini in his *Tresor* and Gervase of Tilbury in his *Otia imperialia*.¹² In such instances, the description of the world generally encompassed the *orbis terrarum*, that is, an outline description of the relative situations of the lands of the known world, as would be laid out on a *mappamundi* showing the *oekumene*. However, like Brunetto Latini's *mappamundi*, these could include information on peoples, flora, and fauna, as well as on the situations of countries. What is meant by the term *mundus* or world, then, is flexible and often inclusive, but also must sometimes be determined from context. When considering the notion of 'geography' in the Middle Ages, then, it is important to remember that it is to some degree anachronistic to impose a division between the earth as a physical concept and the inclusive concept of the world.

1.1.1 Modes of writing about the world in the later medieval West

Consistent with the flexibility of conceptions of the *mundus* in the later-medieval period is the broad range of genres in which writing about the world appears. In referring to such writing I shall, for convenience, henceforth use the term 'geographical writing'. However, this should always be understood as writing that treats of the world in its inclusive, flexible, medieval senses.

¹⁰ *L'Image du monde de Maître Gossouin: Redaction en prose*, ed. by O. H. Prior (Lausanne: Payot, 1913), resumé of chapters, pp. 31-39.

¹¹ Speculations as to the nature of the entire globe were very variable throughout the medieval period and are only tangentially relevant to this thesis. It is therefore necessary to give only this basic generalisation here. A comprehensive, clear and well referenced chronological account of the conflicting theories and of their varying fortunes from antiquity to the sixteenth century appears in W. G. L. Randles, 'Classical Models of World Geography and their Transformation following the Discovery of America', in *The Classical Tradition and the Americas, I: European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition*, ed. by W. Haase and M. Reinhold (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 5-76 (repr. in Randles, *Geography, Cartography and Nautical Science in the Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000)).

¹² Gervase included both a full, detailed continent-by-continent description of the world (II. 2-21, pp. 176-490), an epilogue containing the chief provinces of the world, also termed a 'mapa mundi' by its author (II. 22-25, pp. 490-529): Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. by S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou tresor*, ed. by Francis J. Carmody, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 22 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), pp. 109-20.

Descriptions of the world occur in a variety of different contexts in the later Middle Ages and designated by a bewildering variety of different names. Some of these terms are those identified by Beazley in the paragraph quoted above. The list is not limited to these, however, and variety in terminology is equalled by the variety of contexts and genres in which such writing appears.

1.1.1.1 Compendia and encyclopaedias

Late medieval geographical writing owes its greatest debt to early medieval compendia and encyclopaedias. It was largely through these that later-medieval writers and readers gained access to influential scientific information from classical texts such as Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, Macrobius' *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* and Pomponius Mela's *De chorographia*, until the humanist rediscovery and repackaging of these texts.¹³ The encyclopaedias tend to present an inclusive approach to the study of the world, providing an account of the physical and spiritual world as conceived of by each writer or compiler. Thus Margriet Hoogvliet has shown how Hrabanus Maurus, writing his *De universo / De rerum naturis* in the ninth century 'saw the Creator as ontologically related to the Creation', and thus 'the Creation as a revelation of its Creator'.¹⁴ Hrabanus interprets the world in the same manner as an exegete interprets the word of God, endowing the locations, and sometimes peoples, mentioned in his description of the world with a *sensus spiritualis*.¹⁵ Though a *descriptio orbis terrarum* has a place in such broader cosmological works, it is subordinate to their wider cosmological and theological concerns.

A major source for geographical information in the Latin West was the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville (d. 636). In fact, Isidore's highly influential description of the world (Book 14, 'De terra et partibus') formed the basis of Hrabanus' exegetical descriptions. In Isidore's work the geographical situation of world was distinguished from the flora (Book 17, 'De rebus rusticis'), the fauna (Book 12, 'De animalibus') and the peoples (Book 9, 'De linguis, gentibus, regnis,

¹³ Wright, *The Geographical Lore*, pp. 47-49, 102-06; Bouloux, *Culture et savoirs*, pp. 144-67.

¹⁴ Margriet Hoogvliet, 'Mappae Mundi and the Medieval Hermeneutics of Cartographical Space', in *Regions and Landscapes*, ed. by Peter Ainsworth and Tom Scott (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 26-46 (p. 29; p. 33).

¹⁵ Hoogvliet, 'Mappae Mundi', p. 29.

militia, civibus, affinitatibus’) pertaining to its different parts.¹⁶ Encyclopaedic works similarly influential on the world picture of the later Middle Ages included Solinus’s *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, a work that, certainly with respect to its information about the east, distilled for a medieval audience choice excerpts from Pliny’s expansive multivolume *Naturalis historia*.¹⁷ Also known as the *Polyhistor*, Solinus’s work is a somewhat unfocused compendium of information of all types and from a wide range of sources. The description of the world and its parts, which incorporates a description of India, demonstrates a structural bias towards human geography.¹⁸ Its organisational principle is simply an enumeration of each region of the earth that focuses principally on its peoples, their distinguishing features and those of the land they inhabit, and its marvellous and strange flora and fauna.

The great encyclopaedic compendia of the early Middle Ages led to later Latin and vernacular descendants. Bartholomaeus Anglicus’ *De natura rerum* and Vincent de Beauvais’ *Speculum maius* (both thirteenth-century) ordered their material thematically, breaking the concept of place down into its constituent parts of provinces, islands, rivers, mountains, and separately treating these, and other elements peculiar to place such as animals, plants and precious stones.¹⁹ Bartolomeus’s work was translated into French at the order of Charles V by Jean Corbechon (1372) and into English by John Trevisa (1398). In the later thirteenth century, Brunetto Latini’s encyclopaedic work, *Li livres dou tresor*, which contained a *descriptio orbis* termed ‘mapamonde’ by its author, performed a similar vernacularising function for information from Honorius’s *Imago mundi* and other Latin sources, first in the courtly circle of Charles d’Anjou, then in the urban literate circles of Florence.²⁰

¹⁶ *Etym*, II (Books 12, 14 and 17) and I (Book 9).

¹⁷ Wright, *The Geographical Lore*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Solinus, *CRM*, 52-54.

¹⁹ There is no modern edition of Bartholomeus’ encyclopaedia, but the principle of division can be seen in Trevisa’s translation: *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum: A Critical Text*, ed. by M. C. Seymour, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975-84). Vincent, for example, treats the rivers of Paradise, including the Ganges in Book 5 of the *Speculum naturale* and the islands of the world in Book 32: Vincent, *SM*, I: *Speculum naturale* 5: 36; 32: 17.

²⁰ Latini, *Li Livres dou tresor*, pp. XVIII, XXI-XXII.

1.1.1.2 Histories

Descriptions of the world also appeared in early medieval historical writing, a trend that was followed in later medieval world histories. Profoundly influential throughout the Middle Ages was Paulus Orosius' fifth-century work, the *Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem*. Orosius' work outlined in its opening book, with considerable situational and topographical detail, a Roman division of the world into its provinces repackaged for his Christian audience.²¹ It was often through Orosius that Rome's vision of the world came to influence, directly and indirectly, authors and cartographers of the later Middle Ages.²² Later medieval world chroniclers followed Orosius' lead, treating the description of the world and its parts as an important element in its history. Ranulf Higden began his *Polychronicon* (c.1340), a universal chronicle from the creation of the world to its writer's own times, with a *descriptio orbis*, which in many manuscripts of the work is also accompanied by a world map.²³ Vincent de Beauvais confirms this close connection between the history of the world and its description, incorporating a *descriptio orbis* into the historical books of his great *Speculum maius*. Indeed, in his prologue Vincent makes his understanding of the connection between the history and the description of the world explicit: both lead the reader towards the creator of time and space:

For this world in the great extent of its places resembles in its small measure the immensity of its creator, in the variety of species [it

²¹Paulus Orosius, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, trans. by Roy J. Deterrari (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), pp. 7-20.

²² For the pervasive influence of Orosius on cartography, see Alfred Hiatt, 'Mapping the Ends of Empire', in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. by Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 48-76.

²³ For discussion of Higden's world view, see John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 51-71. For a reproduction of a typical Higden *mappamundi*, see David Woodward, 'Medieval *Mappaemundi*' in *The History of Cartography, I, Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 286-337 (p. 313). The *descriptio orbis*, surviving in English and Latin copies, was one of the most popular portions of the *Polychronicon* in circulation in England. Higden's accompanying *mappamundi* is found in at least 21 manuscripts: John Taylor, 'Higden [Hygden], Ranulf (d. 1364)' in *Trade, Travel and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by John Block Friedman and Kristen Mossler Figg (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 252-54.

resembles] his beauty and in the length of its ages [it resembles] his eternity.²⁴

Vincent's description of the world, divided into three parts and between the three sons of Noah, is situated chronologically in the *Speculum historiale* following his account of Noah and his sons.²⁵ As mentioned above, however, the *Speculum maius*, like Isidore's *Etymologiae*, establishes a division between the overview description of the world in its traditional three parts and specific details on physical geography such as rivers and islands and on plants, animals, peoples and beasts pertaining to those parts, all of which are contained in *Speculum naturale*.

1.1.1.3 Academic cosmographies

From the twelfth century and the rise of the schools, scholarly environments produced and encouraged the use of expositions of the world of very different kinds. Undoubtedly foremost amongst these in influence were Honorius Augustodunensis' basic schoolroom compendium the *Imago mundi* (c. 1100), the 'most widely read book of this nature', and the widely-read academic cosmography or 'astronomical geography' of Sacrobosco, the *De sphaera* and its commentaries (c. 1230).²⁶ Roger Bacon's work on geometry, included in his *Opus maius* (c. 1280), similarly encapsulates much of the learning on the world current in the thirteenth century universities, incorporating Arabic and Greek thought, but was not a popular work of reference.²⁷ The works of Sacrobosco and Bacon were more mathematical and theoretical in approach than their descriptive, narrative or encyclopaedic counterparts, concentrating on the form and measure of the earth, its climatic zones and relationship to the universe. Roger Bacon's work includes, moreover, a defence of the importance of tables of accurate latitudes and longitudes for the knowledge and government of the world. A map, moreover, was, according to internal evidence,

²⁴ 'Ipse namque mundus spaciositate locorum imitatur pro modulo suo creatoris immensitatem, varietate specierum ipsius pulchritudinem, prolixitate quoque temporum ejus eternitatem': Hoogvliet, 'Mappae Mundi', p. 30.

²⁵ Vincent, *SM*, I, 24.

²⁶ Wright, *The Geographical Lore*, p. 103; p. 98; Lynn Thorndike, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and its Commentators* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

²⁷ David Woodward with Herbert M. Howe, 'Roger Bacon on Geography and Cartography', in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays*, ed. by Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 199-222 (p. 213).

sent alongside the work to Clement IV.²⁸ It would be wrong, however, to consider that the mathematical exposition of the world and an understanding of its spiritual significance and place in a fully conceived Christian universe are mutually exclusive tasks. Bacon, in his justification of the religious functions of *geometria*, sets out a double function for writing about the world for the church. Correct knowledge of the situation of the parts and places of the earth is not only necessary for a full understanding of biblical history, it also makes possible the progress towards spiritual understanding of it:

Indeed, he who has a good mental image of places knows both their locations and distance, their height, longitude and latitude and depth, [...] to him, the literal sense of history will be most pleasing, and furthermore, he will more easily be able to proceed towards understanding of the spiritual senses. For there is no doubt that physical paths signify spiritual paths, and physical places signify the ends of spiritual paths [...]²⁹

Bacon's rationale is not only that a correct understanding of place is necessary for the interpretation of Christian history, but indeed that the world itself, like the word of God, is an appropriate locus for exegetical interpretation. Between his discussion of the shape and measure of the world and his descriptions of its parts, however, Bacon also offers a rather more practical function for and justification of the *descriptio orbis terrarum*:

Now it is worth mentioning other regions more famous in scripture and in philosophy. And it is useful for Christians to know about these things for the conversion of the infidels, for various sorts of business that need to be carried out with different peoples, and for the use of the church against the rage of the Antichrist and of those who it is believed will come in his age first to ravage the world, until the greatest troubles come through the Antichrist.³⁰

²⁸ Bacon, *OM*, I, 300-01.

²⁹ 'Qui vero imaginationem bonam locorum habuerit et situm eorum et distantiam et altitudinem et longitudinem latitudinem et profundum cognoverit [...] optime placebit ei historia literalis, et de facili atque magnifice poterit ingredi ad intelligentiam sensuum spiritualium. Non enim dubium est quin viae corporales significant vias spirituales, et loca corporalia significant terminos viarum spiritualium': Bacon, *OM*, I, 183-84.

³⁰ 'Nunc partes aliquas magis famosas in scriptura et in philosophia notare dignum est; et quas utile est sciri a Christianis propter infidelium conversionem, et propter negotia diversa cum diversitate gentium tractanda, ac propter utilitates ecclesiae contra furorem Antichristi et eorum qui tempora ejus praevenire creduntur, ut mundum primo vastent donec tribulatio maxima veniat per Antichristum': Bacon, *OM*, I, 309.

Explicit practical justifications for the description of the world in the later Middle Ages are, however, rare in any context.

It is clear from even the brief outline in this short section that the genres in which writing about the world is to be found in the later Middle Ages range across theology, history and encyclopaedic works, and that it is to be found in works intended for and used by clerical, scholarly, monastic and lay audiences. Though differences in generic context and audience undoubtedly correspond with variations in the treatment and wider significance of the *descriptio orbis terrarum*, there are nevertheless sufficient formal and structural properties common to these descriptions to enable us to make some definitive statements about the generic characteristics and for it to be possible to talk about a loosely defined genre of writing about the world, that is of geographical writing, that exists sometimes independently, but more often as part of historical, encyclopaedic or theological writings. In this period geographical writing both cuts across and is sensitive to generic and social divisions. It travels between genres, yet is modified to suit changes in its generic contexts. It is integral to history, to cosmography, to theology and biblical study, and, in many of its contexts, its status as a form of representation of the world cannot be disentangled from its spiritual significance.

1.1.1.4 Travel Writing

In her study, *Culture et savoirs géographiques en Italie au XIV^e siècle*, Nathalie Bouloux discusses travel accounts ('les récits de voyage') as sources of geographical information for the prehumanists of the late fourteenth century.³¹ Whilst it is undoubtedly true that travel accounts were potential sources of geographical information, there are problems with the idea of considering them geographical writings themselves. In 4.2, I discuss in detail some of the ways in which travel accounts of the Indies differ stylistically, formally and in terms of content from the types of geographical writings discussed above. It is, meanwhile, necessary to observe here that as well as such differences separating travel accounts from other forms of geographical writings, there are also many formal, stylistic and rhetorical variations within the broad genre of 'travel writing' itself. Thus Jean Richard has observed that, whilst it is possible to extrapolate the characteristic traits of a genre

from the widely variant works that may be termed travel writing, it is nevertheless a ‘multiform’ genre.³² Multiform though this genre may be (Richard identifies seven sub-groups ranging from normally basic guides for merchants or pilgrims to the often detailed reports of ambassadors), it is nevertheless clear that by the mid-fourteenth century travel accounts were perceived as having some form of generic coherence by their readers. By this stage, as I show in detail in Chapter 7, Boccaccio is able to poke fun at the genre in the *Decameron*, secure in the knowledge that his audience would be sufficiently familiar with the genre to understand the joke. By 1356 the anonymous author of *The Book of John Mandeville* — also discussed in Chapter 7 — is familiar enough with the generic expectations of readers of such accounts to be able to concoct a masterly imitation of the genre, sufficiently convincing to fool its audiences for several hundred years. Thus, by the mid-fourteenth century, writers were able to extract generic conventions of formal, rhetorical and stylistic types from travel accounts, and successfully deploy them in fictional contexts.

By the period relevant to this thesis, then, the circulation of travel accounts of pilgrims to the Holy Land and missionaries and diplomats to Mongol Asia had resulted in a loose genre with its own set of generic expectations. Turning away for the moment, however, from the type of rhetorical, formal and stylistic analysis carried out by Guéret-Laferté in order to establish generic criteria, it is necessary to note that very little work has as yet been completed on the reception, function and use of accounts belonging to this newly-defined medieval genre or any of its subgroups.³³ Thus, although texts from this loose generic group contain information

³¹Bouloux, *Culture et savoirs*, pp. 170-74.

³² Jean Richard, *Les récits de voyages et de pèlerinages*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, 38 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), pp. 8-9; Michèle Guéret-Laferté argues from a detailed study of eyewitness accounts of Asia under Mongol rule that these share sufficient rhetorical characteristics to be considered a literary form, which she considers to be in its infancy in this period: Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l'Empire mongol: Ordre et rhétorique des relations de voyage aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge 28 (Paris: Champion, 1994), pp. 381-82. See also Scott D. Westrem, *Broader Horizons: A Study of Johannes Witte de Hese's Itinerarius and Medieval Travel Narratives* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 2001), pp. 11-40.

³³ Examples of studies that consider the function of travel accounts include Scott Westrem's examination of the didactic possibilities of three accounts, including *Mandeville's Travels* in 'Two Routes to Pleasant Instruction in Late-Fourteenth-Century Literature', in *The Work of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by D. G. Allen and R. A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 67-80; Francesca Romana Camarota considers the differences between three versions of Odorico's *Relatio* as relating to their

of a geographical nature, it still remains unclear to what extent and how this was read and used. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis will, it is hoped, go some way towards filling this lacuna.

1.2 Textual contexts of writing about the Indies around 1300

In the context of medieval western perceptions, it is not possible to talk about India meaning a discrete, bordered geopolitical unit analogous to the modern nation state. In the later Middle Ages, disparate and changeable smaller political units made up the region that corresponds with modern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, an area at the time externally perceived as ‘India’ or *al-hind* but not necessarily internally so.³⁴ In discussing representations of India in the later Middle Ages, then, this thesis is not concerned with representations of a specific temporally delimited geopolitical entity. Thus in mainland India, for example, political and administrative units such as the Delhi Sultanate, the Chola Kingdoms of the Coromandel coast, the Pandya kingdoms of Ma’bar, the Hoysola kingdoms in the Deccan and, later, Vijayanagara, although encountered by the travellers discussed in this thesis, are not its primary subjects.³⁵ Instead, the parameters of the geographical area that is the focus of this study are determined by the properties and characteristics of India as perceived by the western writers and travellers of the later Middle Ages, and are thus impossible to absolutely define in modern terms. However, though India did not have a stable geographical, political and religious unity in the later Middle Ages, an area sometimes termed ‘India’, yet sometimes fragmented into *India prima, secunda* and *tertia*; India the Greater and India the Less; *India intra* and *extra Gangem*; *India ultima* and *India media*, nevertheless retained a certain conceptual unity in the

different intended audiences in ‘Dalla “relatio” di Odorico da Pordenone al *De rebus incognitis*’, *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, Ser. 8, 95 (1991), 31-39.

³⁴ For the political history of the region in this period, see Romila Tharpar, *A History of India from the Discovery to 1526* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966); Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Military and Political History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Burton Stein, *Vijayanagara: The New Cambridge History of India*, 1.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

³⁵ As will be detailed in Chapter 2, Jordanus Catalani encounters and reports on the power of the Sultan of Delhi (Ghiyāth al-Dīn) in 1321: *Mirabilia descripta: Les Merveilles de l’Asie par le Père Jourdain* ed. by Henri Cordier (Paris: Geuthner, 1925), p. 114; Odorico da Pordenone reports incidentally on its extent as far as Tana after 1321 in his account of the intervention of the Sultan (‘imperator’) in proceedings relating to the martyrdom of four Franciscans at Tana: *SF*, I, 8, 435. Marco Polo reports on the Pandya Kingdom of ‘Senderbandi Devar’ and the Hoysola Kingdom of Telingana: Yule-Cordier, II, 334-35; Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology*, p. 68.

understanding of later-medieval writers and, later, travellers. To complicate matters yet further, however, this conceptual entity and its constituent parts correspond only partially with modern geographical divisions. Marco Polo, for instance, as will be discussed in 4.3, places Champa (roughly equivalent to modern Vietnam) in the same geographical region as Orissa, in northerly India to the West of the Bay of Bengal.

The section that follows will attempt to identify the specific properties of the conceptions of India as a place that were current around 1300, the historical moment when, as is outlined in Chapter 2, western travellers began to bring back eyewitness accounts. This will establish the horizon of expectations with which the travellers discussed in this thesis approached ‘the Indies’ as well as that of medieval readers when faced with a description of this distant place.

1.2.1 India in the *descriptiones orbis*

Basic chorographical accounts of India — that is, treatments of its regional geography — are to be found in *descriptiones orbis* in every genre in which these feature, including *Imagines mundi*, encyclopaedias and universal chronicles. The information provided in the *descriptiones*, however, is normally traceable back to a narrow range of sources: largely the late classical and early medieval sources outlined in the 1.1.1 above. Later medieval writers used the works of Isidore of Seville, Solinus, and Paulus Orosius, generally mediated through Honorius Augustodunensis, who had themselves selected, compiled and reworked information taken from classical Latin accounts.³⁶ An analysis of the treatment of India in the *descriptiones orbis* reveals a consistent core of information about its features and properties, various elements of which are sometimes emphasised and sometimes abbreviated according to the priorities, purposes and projected audience of each writer.

³⁶ Wright, *The Geographical Lore*, pp. 274-75. Essential classical texts on India are edited and commented upon in *L’Inde vue de Rome: textes latins de l’antiquité relatifs à l’Inde*, ed. and trans by J. André and J. Filliozat (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1986). Rudolph Wittkower has carefully traced the impact of Greek sources on the Latin accounts in ‘Marvels of the East’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), 159-97 (repr. in Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 49-73).

1.2.1.1 Honorius Augustodunensis

The very influential *De imagine mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis, composed early in the twelfth century, incorporates a heavily abbreviated description of India that relies principally upon on the *Historia adversus paganos* of Paulus Orosius, upon Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and on Solinus's *Collectanea*. Honorius's *descriptio orbis* first discusses paradise and its four rivers, which in his opinion flow under the earth before emerging at their apparent sources, that of the Ganges being in India.³⁷ Honorius then states that after paradise (the reader is left to presume that his description moves in a westerly direction) there are 'many places that are deserted and impassable, on account of the variety of serpents and wild animals' before moving on to an account of India:³⁸

Then there is India, named after the River Indus, which rises in the north [of the country] from Mount Caucasus and, running to the south, flows into the Red Sea. This [river] encloses India on the West side, and the Indian Ocean is named after it.³⁹

Honorius proceeds to identify as pertaining to India, Taprobane, and the twin Islands of Crisa and Argere, the semi-legendary ancient incarnations of Sri Lanka and the Golden Chersonese respectively.⁴⁰ Following this discussion of the situation of India, the text moves on to discuss a series of physically monstrous and morally exotic peoples attributed to this location, including the pygmies (*pigmei*), the brahmans (*bragmanni*) and the dog-headed men (*cenocephali*), followed, in a separate section, with its wild and marvellous beasts.⁴¹ Flint has assiduously identified Honorius's sources for this passage, which include Solinus, Isidore of Seville, Orosius and the apocryphal *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* (1.2.2.1).⁴²

³⁷ This attempt to reconcile empirical knowledge of the sources of the Nile, Ganges, Tigris and Euphrates with Genesis' account of the four rivers of Paradise derives from Isidore: Wright, *Geographical Lore* p. 264.

³⁸ 'Post paradysum sunt loca multa deserta et inuia, ob diversa serpentium et ferarum animalia': Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago mundi*, p. 52.

³⁹ 'Deinde est India ab Indo flumine dicta. Qui ad septentrionem de monte Caucaso nascitur, et ad meridiem cursum suum dirigens a Rubro mari excipitur. Hoc India ab occidente clauditur, et ab hoc Indicus oceanus dicitur': Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago mundi*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ Taprobane (Sri Lanka), according to Honorius and his source Solinus, enjoys two summers and two winters per year and is always green. This detail, deriving from Pliny and indicating the great southward extent of the island, led Pliny, Pomponius Mela and some later authors to speculate that Taprobane belonged to an *alterum orbem*, that is; another *orbis terrarum*: Randles, 'Classical Geography', p. 13. Honorius omits this opinion.

⁴¹ Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago mundi*, pp. 52-54.

⁴² Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago mundi*, p. 53.

However, all these sources are significantly simplified in Honorius's text. Solinus's *Collectanea* contains much more detail than Honorius includes, particularly concerning peoples and marvellous beasts.⁴³ Orosius' account, by contrast, is more detailed in its spatial geography, but omits much of the human, animal and vegetation detail present in Solinus's description.⁴⁴ Honorius's emphasis, then, in his exclusion of Orosius' topographical detail and in his selections from Solinus and Isidore, shifts perceptibly towards the marvellous.

1.2.1.2 Vincent de Beauvais

As I have discussed above, in Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*, a description of the situation of the earth and its regions is inserted into the work at the chronologically-determined point of the division of the earth between the sons of Noah. The chapter 'De India et eius mirabilibus' is included in the *descriptio orbis* that accompanies this account of the division of the world. After explaining that Shem obtains Asia, Ham Africa and Japhet Europe, Vincent inserts a *Descriptio orbis* in which India begins the first section, that concerning Asia:

India is named after the Indus river, by which it is separated from the western region [of the world]. This country, extending from the southern sea, reaches as far as the rising of the sun and, in the north, as far as Mount Caucasus, having many peoples and towns. Moreover [it has] the island of Taprobane stuffed with gems and elephants, Chryse and Argyre rich in gold and silver and useful trees never lacking leaves. It also has the Ganges, the Nida [not identified] and the Hipanes [marking the limit of Alexander the Great's progress], watering the Indians. The land of India, with the healthful breath of Favonius, reaps fruit twice yearly, experiencing [twice] the change from summer to autumn. It also yields men of dark colour, enormous elephants, the *monoceros* [rhinoceros], the parrot, and moreover has woods: ebony, cinnamon, pepper, the aromatic reed. It exports ivory, stones including those precious beryls, crysoprases, the diamond, carbuncles, lychnites, pearls and large pearls, for which the desire of noble women burns. In that place there are also

⁴³ Solinus, *CRM*, 52-54.

⁴⁴ After broadly describing Asia, bounded by the Eastern Ocean, and containing the promontory of Caligardamana, Taprobane, the promontory of Samara and the Ottorogora River, Orosius writes: 'In this land is India, with on the west the Indus River, which flows into the Red Sea and with the Caucasus mountain on the north. The rest of India, as I have said, is bounded by the Eastern and Indian Oceans. India has forty-four peoples, not taking into consideration the island Taprobane, which has ten cities, and leaving aside many inhabited islands' ('In his finibus India est, quae habet ab occidente flumen indum, quod Rubro mari excipitur: a septentrione montem caucasum: reliqua (ut dixi) Eoo et Indico Oceano terminatur. Haec habet gentes quadraginta quatuor, absque insula Taprobane, quae habet decem civitates: et absque reliquis insulis habitabilibus plurimis'): Orosius, *Historiarum libri septem*, 1, II, 13-14, *PL*, 31, col. 0676A.

mountains of gold, which it is impossible to approach on account of dragons, gryphons and monstrous giant men.⁴⁵

This description functions as an epitome or summary overview of India as a place. Key properties of the place are noted: what constitutes its borders, major rivers, its famous islands and their properties, its famous fertility, its famous monstrous beasts and peoples, its exotic spices, precious stones and metals. Following this summary description, the *Speculum* then focuses in on particular aspects of the place in more detail: India was thought to constitute one third of the earth; it contains 50,000 cities and 9000 peoples. A legend according to which the Hellenic God Dionysius or Liber Pater vanquishes India is alluded to, though Vincent does not mention the linked legend of his foundation of the legendary city of Nysa.⁴⁶ Also mentioned are the great rivers Ganges and Indus and Gange, the legendary great island in the Ganges. The city and people of Palybotra, singled out as great and powerful, are discussed in a little more detail.⁴⁷ Situated to the north, beyond Palybotra is Mount Maleus, a legendary mountain mentioned by Pliny (6: 69) and Solinus (54: 13), on which shadows fall to the north in winter and to the south in summer. The country enjoys two winters and two summers per year, and the unbearable heat in the vicinity of the Indus river towards the south yields the distinctive colour of the people. Finally, Vincent ends with a few highlights from the legendary store of monstrous and strange men, animals and wondrous plants: pygmies inhabit the mountains; a people called the Pandians are ruled by women; the country breeds great snakes, enormous eels, gigantic reeds and monsters such as the leucrocata, manticore, and monoceros.

⁴⁵ 'India ab Indo flumine dicta est, quo ex parte occidentali clauditur; haec a meridiano mari porrecta, vsque ad ortum solis et a septentrione, vsque ad montem Caucasum pervenit, habens gentes multas et oppida. Insulam quoque Taprobanam gemmis et elephantibus refertam, Chrysen et Argyren auro et argento foecundas: utilem quoque arborem foliis nunquam carentem; habet et fluvios Gangem, Nidam, et Hypanem, illustrantes Indos. Terra Indiae Favonii spiritu saluberrima in anno bis metit fruges, vices hyemis Ethesiis potitur. Gignit autem tincti coloris homines, elephantem ingentes, Monoceron bestiam; Psitacum avem, hebenum quoque lignum, et cinnamomum, et piper, et calamum aromaticum: mittit ebur, lapides quoque preciosos, beryllos, crisoprasos, adamantem, carbunculos, lychnites, margaritas, et uniones, quibus nobilium foeminarum ardet ambitio; ibi sunt et montes aurei quos adire propter dracones et gryphas et immensorum hominum monstra impossibile est': Vincent, *SM*, I: *Speculum historiale*, 1: 64.

⁴⁶ The legend of the foundation of Nysa by Dionysius (Liber Pater) was common in classical accounts of India, appearing for example in Pliny and Eusebius: André and Filliozat, *L'Inde vue de Rome*, p. 18.

⁴⁷ From Solinus, *CRM*, 52: 12. Palibotra (Patna) was described by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the Mauryan empire under Chandragupta after the campaigns of Alexander. Vincent mentions the Palibothra of Chandragupta as though still current: *SM*, IV: *Speculum historiale*, 1: 64.

As with Honorius's *De imagine mundi*, the tendency in Vincent's account is towards compilation, compression and simplification of sources. In his abbreviated account, a few cities, rivers and features are extracted and rendered emblematic of the whole. Vincent does not signal quite how much more there is to be read about India either in Solinus's *Collectanea*, in other sources, or even in other books of his own encyclopaedia. Indeed, the *Speculum historiale* contains much more information about India that is not included in 'De India et eius mirabilibus'. In the *Speculum historiale* as in Orosius' *Historia contra paganos*, information on historical events such as the campaigns of Alexander and the mission of St. Thomas occur in their chronological position within the history.⁴⁸ Similarly, more detailed information on India's precious stones, plant life, monstrous races and beasts, major rivers, mountains and islands is to be found instead —unreferenced in 'De India' — in the appropriate sections of the *Speculum naturale*.⁴⁹

Vincent de Beauvais' information relating to India is, then, dispersed through different chapters and books of the *Speculum maius*. Such a dispersal, however, allows inconsistencies between the facts Vincent supplies in different places. Amongst these is the geographical contradiction between the classically inspired single India that appears in the *descriptio orbis* (*Speculum historiale*, Book 1), and the distinction between 'India inferior' and 'India superior' that is mentioned but not explained in the *Speculum historiale*'s Book 9, in which Vincent's account of St. Thomas' evangelisation of India is presented.⁵⁰ In Vincent's *Speculum*, then, the image of India is fragmented, and functions differently in different contexts.

1.2.1.3 Gossouin de Metz

Whilst Honorius's and Vincent's texts circulated in Latin and principally amongst monastic and scholarly readers, in the thirteenth century, authors in France and Italy began to vernacularise *descriptions orbis* for the use of non-Latin-literate lay audiences.⁵¹ I have already shown that Gossouin's *Image du monde* provides a full

⁴⁸ Alexander's exploits in India are treated in *SM IV: Speculum historiale*, 4: 47-71. The mission of St. Thomas is treated at 9: 62-67.

⁴⁹ For example, the monstrous races are treated in *SM*, 1: *Speculum naturale*, 31: 126-31.

⁵⁰ *SM*, I: *Speculum historiale*, 9: 64.

⁵¹ On the probable lay audience of Gossouin's *Image du monde* see Ch.-V. Langlois, *La connaissance de la nature et du monde au moyen âge d'après quelques écrits français à l'usage des laïcs* (Paris: Hachette, 1911), p. IX. The process of vernacularisation begins much later in English. The first

description of the world that is part of a wider discussion of the nature of the universe, in which the physical description of the *orbis terrarum* is relegated to a second level in the text's hierarchy of importance. On this second level, however, Gossouin's description of India occupies a significant position. His first chapter concerning the country, 'D'Ynde et de ses choses' is a brief summary description. Though clearly based on Honorius's *De imagine mundi* —already an abridgement and simplification of its sources — it is yet again simplified. After situating India next to the deserts that separate the terrestrial paradise from the inhabited world, giving an account of its name and explaining that it is 'enclosed all around by the great sea that encircles it',⁵² Gossouin places the island of Taprobane ('Probane') 'en Ynde' and describes it as an idyllic, fertile island of two summers, rich in precious metals and stones. Following Honorius, Gossouin then alludes generally to India's mountains of gold and precious stones and other treasures that no man may reach for fear of the dragons and gryphons. Further detailed description is almost rendered unnecessary by Gossouin's surprising next statement:

In that place there are many other places so sweet and delightful and so spiritual that, if one were in them, one would say that it were paradise.⁵³

The function of this extraordinary summary statement is to open a space for the reader's imagination to operate: readers merely need imagine an earthly paradise in order to understand India. The allusion also clearly indicates, however, that the repeated references in medieval texts to India's fertility, to its healthful air, to its wealth and to its spices were read by their contemporaries as utopian.

The compiler proceeds from this summary statement to a chapter ostensibly concerned with the 'diversitez d'Ynde'. During the course of this chapter, however, it quickly becomes apparent that the diversities that most concern the compiler are those of the behaviour and appearance of peoples – in which interest he largely

vernacular English *descriptions orbis* were probably those in John Trevisa's English translations of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* (1387) and Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum* (1398): Christian K. Zacher, 'Travel and Geographical Writings', in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English* (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967-), 7 (1986), 2235-54 (p. 2236).

⁵²'close tout entour de la grant mer qui l'avironne': Gossouin, *Image*, p. 110.

⁵³'Si y a mainz autres lieus si douz et si delitables et si espirituels que, se uns hons estoiet dedenz, il diroit que ce seroit paradis': Gossouin, *Image*, p. 110.

follows his main source, Honorius.⁵⁴ A further long and detailed chapter is devoted — without acknowledgement of its contradiction of Gossouin’s paradisiacal image of the place — to the serpents and beasts of India and a short one to its precious stones.⁵⁵ Both chapters are noteworthy for departing almost entirely from Honorius, Gossouin’s main source for India so far, and for introducing elements from sources such as the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, Alexander Neckham’s *De naturis rerum* and Jacques de Vitry’s *Historia hierosolymitana*.⁵⁶ Two points in particular concerning Gossouin’s discussion demand notice. Firstly, the *Image* devotes more space to discussion of India than to the entirety of Europe and Africa put together. Indeed, India is the only place in the work to enjoy such extensive treatment. This anomaly appears to be due in part to a conflation of the meaning of the term ‘India’ with ‘Asia’, as evidenced by the many central Asian and even African locations that Gossouin attributes to the region, and in part to influences from the legendary tradition of the ‘Marvels of the East’.⁵⁷ Secondly, Gossouin substantially reworks the material and structure of the *De imagine mundi*, incorporating material on beasts, precious stones, fish, and trees under the unifying theme ‘India’.

The *Image du Monde*, then, simplifies and modifies Honorius’s already basic description of the geographical location of India, whilst simultaneously broadening his criteria for information to be included in a description of India to include an extended discussion of such features as animals, plants and minerals. Although Gossouin incorporates information into his description of India on the basis of the unifying principle of place, his conception of the situation of that place on the surface of the earth, and its relationship to the seas, mountains, rivers and islands that surround and delimit it is remarkably vague. Instead, the *Image du monde*’s conception of India as a place is imaginative to the exclusion of the spatially-geographical. Its enumeration of India’s monstrous peoples, marvellous beasts and precious stones, coupled with Gossouin’s seemingly contradictory judgement that India is a paradisiacal place, serve to evoke a place utterly different from his audience’s known and experienced world. At the same time, the *Image*’s vague spatial discussion of the place and omission of any mention of powerful and

⁵⁴Gossouin, *Image*, pp. 111-13; compare to Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago Mundi*, 53-54.

⁵⁵Gossouin, *Image*, pp. 110-20.

⁵⁶As identified in Prior’s footnotes: Gossouin, *Image*, pp. 110-113.

populous cities renders it quite literally an uncivilised place, a non-urbanised domain of wild beasts and strange peoples. Gossouin simultaneously renders India spatially vague, and strongly evokes a sense of a strange and wild place.

Like geographical writing in general, the writing of the regional geography of India operates according to generic expectations. In all the above accounts of the situation of India, there exists a basic core of information, around which non-essential elements of description are in flux. Essential elements of the description seem to include its northern border of the Imaus mountains (Himalayas), its western and eastern borders of the Indus and Ganges, its enclosure to the South by the sea and its nearness to the terrestrial paradise. Non-essential but common elements include accounts of the islands of Taprobane, Cryse and Argyre as either close to India or within its undefined borders. A very common element is an account of monstrous races and morally exotic peoples, marvellous animals and exotic flora such as white pepper and giant reeds, and precious minerals such as jewels and metals. Other variable elements that sometimes are added to this core include greater precision in the location of the country in relation to gulfs, seas and mountain ranges, accounts of cities, whether legendary or historical such as Palibothra and Nysa, and details of peoples.⁵⁸ Across the chorographical descriptions, moreover, a tension is discernible between India as encapsulating aspects of the idyllic and the paradisiacal, and India as a locus of monstrosity, of the uncivilised and the strange. Over time, moreover, the diligent if outdated account of India's provinces, cities and peoples that Pliny the Elder provides in his *Historia naturalis* is abridged to the loss of specificity, of urban civilisation, and detailed ethnography, resulting in the country's eventual medieval identity with the extreme and the marvellous.⁵⁹

1.2.2 Legendary India

If the *descriptions orbis* present in cosmographies, histories and encyclopaedias in the later-medieval West put forward an image of India that fluctuates around an essentially stable core, the representations of India found in legendary writings were permanently shifting tapestries, endlessly recycling a loosely connected set of

⁵⁷ 'Des diversitez d'Ynde': Gossouin, *Image*, p. 111.

⁵⁸ For example, Latini, *Li livres dou tresor*, 1: 122, pp. 113-14.

⁵⁹ See Pliny the Elder, *HN*, 6: 21, 56-6: 25, 92.

legendary features and motifs in different combinations. The types of legendary writings concerning India that were influential in the later Middle Ages fall into three broad groups: the legends of Prester John, narratives of the conquests of Alexander the Great, and biblical and apocryphal legends, including that of St. Thomas' evangelisation of the country. Although for the purposes of the discussion that follows I present these sets of legends in three distinct strands, it is necessary to stress that, in later-medieval sources, these strands became intertwined to such a degree that they are impossible to distinguish from one another. Indeed, as Lach notes, 'the composite form that [these legends] assumed in the late Middle Ages became the source for what might be called the medieval dream of the East', an obfuscatory and pervasive influence on medieval conceptions of India.⁶⁰

As the scholarship of legendary writings concerning the east has received so far perhaps the fullest treatment of all types of writing on India — far fuller, for example, than that of the *descriptions orbis terrarum* — I will outline the main trends of thought and representation in this category only briefly, noting in particular their impact on other genres of writing about India.⁶¹

1.2.2.1 The Legends of Alexander the Great

Information concerning India traceable to Alexander the Great's campaigns in India formed an ultimate source for the many of the details concerning the country given in the *descriptions orbis* outlined above. The account of Megasthenes, ambassador of the general of Alexander the Great and Persian ruler Seleucus I Nicator (358-281 BC) to the great Mauryan city of Pataliputra (Vincent's Palibothra), contained, in addition to what were already the stock 'Marvels of the East' of the Greek tradition, detailed descriptions of provinces, cities and peoples that formed the basis of Pliny the Elder's account.⁶² In addition to this descriptive tradition, however, a separate, legendary tradition, focused on the exploits of Alexander in India, soon emerged

⁶⁰ Lach, *Asia*, I, 25.

⁶¹ Legendary treatments of the East, including India, have the fullest bibliography of all areas relating to medieval perceptions of India. In addition to the important works by Wittkower already cited, see in particular: John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981); Emmanuele Baumgartner, 'L'Orient d'Alexandre', in *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre*, 6 (1988), 7-15.

⁶² Megasthenes' marvellous details derive from the fabulous reports from the *Indica* of the Greek Ctesias: Wittkower, 'Marvels', pp. 47-48; Wright, *Geographical Lore*, pp. 37-38.

alongside these works.⁶³ The Alexander presented in texts such as the Archpresbyter Leo's *Historia de preliis*, the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, the correspondence between Alexander and Dindimus, the King of the Brahmans, the *Iter ad paradisum* and their late medieval derivatives, encounters a stream of fabulous peoples and animals in a fictionalised setting of sometimes metaphorical wastelands, ponds, mountains and edenic gardens.⁶⁴ The legendary conqueror encounters and enters into dialogue with marvellous peoples such as the Gymnosophists, the Brahmans, the Amazons and even a race of part-women-part-flowers.⁶⁵ The process by which Alexander was turned from an albeit idealised historical figure, campaigning in a historical time across historical space, into an epic and romance hero, campaigning across fictionalised, often symbolic or metaphorical space is a complex one. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it is the strikingly simple end result of this process and its effect on representations of India that is significant. Whereas Pliny's detailed survey of cities, regions, and peoples presented India as 'uncovered' and as a result of Alexander's campaigns, 'thoroughly known to us',⁶⁶ with its places and peoples named alongside the numbers of infantrymen and cavalrymen they are able to supply, the India of the Alexander legends is presented as a metaphor for the unknown end of the world, the wild and the strange. Whilst in many versions of the legends Alexander conquers this unknown, even reaching the gates of paradise itself, some versions concentrate disapprovingly on the pride and paganism of the conqueror, stressing his inability to conquer the virtuous Brahmans, whom he is unable to tempt or impress with the things of this world.⁶⁷ Legends of Alexander retain their popularity throughout the later medieval period, being regularly rewritten

⁶³ For legends of Alexander in the Middle Ages see George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, ed. by D. J. A. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

⁶⁴ The letter and pseudo-correspondence is edited in *Iuli Valeri Alexandri Polemi, res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, ed. by Bernard Kübner (Leipzig: Teubner, 1888). All three texts are translated in *The Romances of Alexander*, trans. by Dennis M. Kratz (New York: Garland, 1991).

⁶⁵ For a detailed account of the fictionalisation and symbolism of the landscapes across which Alexander campaigns in influential French versions of the legend, see Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, *Les Romans d'Alexandre: aux frontières de l'épique et du romanesque* (Paris: Honoré Champion 1998), pp. 244-54.

⁶⁶ It is 'comperta' and 'penitus cognitioni nostrae addicta': Pliny, *NH*, 6: 58.

⁶⁷ For example, Walter of Châtillon in his *Alexandreis* has Alexander in India at the 'boundary of the world' desire to 'penetrate the shores of the antipodes': *The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon: A Verse Translation*, trans. by David Townsend (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 166. The Middle English *Wars of Alexander* concentrates in detail on Alexander's philosophical duel at the hands of the Brahmans, *Wars of Alexander*, ed. by Hoyt N. Duggan and Thorlac Turville Petre (Oxford: Early English Texts Society, 1989), pp. 139-52.

and updated to fit new audiences and purposes. Indeed, in the late-fifteenth-century prose *Alexander* of Vasco da Lucena, the hero becomes a proto-colonial model for princely aggression, encouraging Christian leaders to emulate if not outdo the pagan conqueror in making conquests and conversions for the greater good of Christianity.⁶⁸ Thus in this schema, India stands metaphorically for places in the world that could be considered appropriate for colonisation and Christianisation.

1.2.2.2 Scripture, St. Thomas, and the three Indies

Similarly important in forming later medieval perceptions of India or, in this instance, the Indies, is a separate tradition of scriptural and apocryphal writing. André Filliozat has noted how early Christian writers wrongly attributed many places mentioned in the Old Testament to India, citing, among others, Ophir, from which King Solomon obtained gold, and Evilah, the land where gold is to be found according to Genesis 2:11.⁶⁹ Moreover, following the diffusion of the apocryphal Gospel, Acts and Miracles of Thomas the Apostle in the Latin West, the belief that Thomas evangelised India shortly after the resurrection of Christ became pervasive. The Old Latin *Acts of Thomas* and *Miracles of Thomas* recount the dispatch of Thomas to India by the resurrected Christ. Employed to build a palace for the Indian king Gundaphorus, the apostle instead distributes the king's money to the poor.⁷⁰ Thomas is about to be put to death when the king's brother dies and in heaven is shown the palace Thomas has built using the king's money. The king's brother then miraculously returns to life and reports his vision, resulting in the liberation of Thomas. The apostle then travels to 'India superior', where he perform miracles and converts many people, including the wife of the king. For this, Thomas is martyred and buried in a tomb on a hill outside the town. Later, his relics are removed and

⁶⁸ Sandrine Hériché notes with regard to Jean Wauquelin's *rémaniement* of the Alexander Legend in mid-fifteenth-century Burgundy that it renders Alexander a model for Christian princely behaviour, emphasising his piety and humility. Vasco da Lucena's *Alexander* (c. 1468), by contrast, is a pagan conqueror, who must be emulated and surpassed by Charles the Bold, the Christian prince who may use conquering might to the good of Christianity: *Les faits et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Jehan Wauquelin*, ed. by Sandrine Hériché (Geneva: Droz, 2000), pp. xxiv, xxxvi.

⁶⁹ André and Filliozat, *L'Inde vue de Rome*, p. 20.

⁷⁰ Gundaphorus has been identified with Gondopharnes, a Parthian ruler of northern India between AD 16 and c. AD 45: Stephen Neil, *A History of Christianity in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 28.

translated to Edessa.⁷¹ Details of the apostolate of Thomas are known to the early medieval West via the Old Latin *Acts* and *Miracles* and, later, via Jacopo da Voragine's retelling in the *Legenda aurea*, as well as incorporation in universal histories such as Vincent's *Speculum historiale*.

Tied closely to the tradition of St. Thomas's evangelisation of India is the schematic division of India into two, or three parts. Explicitly mentioned in the *Acts of Thomas*, and in works that derive from it, is the division between 'upper' and 'lower' India.⁷² However, a tripartite division of India is established in many texts relating to its evangelisation, often linked to the tradition that the Saints Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew each evangelised a different division. The seventh-century *De historia certaminis apostolici* of Pseudo-Abdias alleges that 'India superior' was evangelised by Bartholomew, 'India inferior' by St Thomas, and 'India tertia' by St. Matthew.⁷³ Gervase of Tilbury follows this tradition, similarly attributing 'India superior' to Bartholomew and India inferior to Thomas. Gervase also asserts, moreover, that the apostle Matthew evangelised 'India meridiana que tangit Echiopiam' ('southern India, which touches upon Ethiopia').⁷⁴

Whether in spite of or because of their geographical imprecision, the legends of St. Thomas proved a potent ingredient in the crucible of later-medieval legends of India. In some accounts Thomas is said to have found the Magi alive on his return to India and baptised them, thus linking Thomas and India to their story and their cult.⁷⁵ The palace that the apostle builds in heaven becomes the model for Prester John's palace, and, as will become clear in the next section, the saint himself

⁷¹ This summary of the main Latin traditions is based upon the editions of the *Passio Sancti Thomae Apostoli* and the *De Miraculis Beati Thomae Apostoli*, in *Die alten lateinischen Thomasakten*, ed. by Klaus Zelzer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), pp. 3-42 and pp. 45-77.

⁷² See for example 'Saint Thomas, Apostle', in Jacopo da Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1993]), I, 29-35 (p. 33). Elysaeus' recension of the Prester John legend (twelfth century) also divides India in two: see Wright, *The Geographical Lore*, p. 265.

⁷³ Bernard Hamilton, 'Prester John and the Three Kings of Cologne', in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, ed. by Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), pp. 177-91 (p. 184).

⁷⁴ *Otia imperialia*, pp. 182-85. Similar confusion between India and Ethiopia in Greek sources is outlined by Philip Mayerson in 'A Confusion of the Indias: Asian India and African India in the Byzantine Sources', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 113 (1993), 169-74.

⁷⁵ Hamilton, 'Prester John and the Three Kings of Cologne', p. 175.

becomes an iconic figure in the Prester John legends.⁷⁶ It is noteworthy, however, that this tendency to combine and conflate legendary elements does not generally extend to the incorporation of elements from the St. Thomas legends into the descriptions of India in the *descriptiones orbis*. Elements such as King Gundophorus, his city, and the division into two or three Indies rarely occur in the types of description surveyed in 1.2.1, the idiosyncratic account of Gervase of Tilbury being a rare exception.⁷⁷ Pervasive though the legend of St. Thomas was, it rarely penetrated the Romanised vision of the world presented unfailingly in late antique and medieval geographical writings.

1.2.2.3 Prester John

The third and final main source of legendary material relating to India, the legend of Prester John, ruler of the ‘three Indies’, has been the subject of frequent scholarly discussion.⁷⁸ The legendary priest-king is first named and his powers outlined in the late-twelfth century *Littera Presbyteris Johannis*, addressed ostensibly to the Greek emperor Manuel Comnenus in 1165.⁷⁹ The circumstances of production of this letter, undoubtedly a western fiction, are still disputed.⁸⁰ However, whatever these circumstances may have been, it is clear that, within a short space of time, retellings of the legend circulated widely, its original context and purpose long forgotten, and its subject matter considered marvellous fact. The influence and circulation of this legend persisted beyond 1500, during all of which time travellers including Marco Polo, Jordanus Catalani (see 2.2.2) and others professed to have identified and

⁷⁶ Prester John’s palace is an earthly replica of the heavenly palace Thomas builds for Gundopharnes: Hamilton, ‘Prester John’, p. 181.

⁷⁷ Gervase includes his account of Thomas and an identification of the Three Indies in his summary description of Eastern Asia, *Otia imperialia*, pp. 180-84.

⁷⁸ The fundamental collection of texts and studies is Beckingham and Hamilton (eds.), *Prester John*. For identification of historical elements see Meir Bar-Ilan, ‘Prester John: Fiction and History’, *History of European Ideas*, 20 (1995), 291-98 and Charles E. Nowell, ‘The Historical Prester John’, *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 435-45. Prester John rules ‘in tribus Indiis’: *Der Priester Johannes*, ed. by Friedrich Zarncke, *Abhandlungen der philologisch historischen Classe der Koeniglich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 8, 1 (Leipzig: Shirzel, 1876-79), p. 910.

⁷⁹ The development of the legend is succinctly outlined in C. F. Beckingham, ‘The Achievements of Prester John’ in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R..H. C. Davis*, ed. by H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London: Hambledon, 1985), pp. 177-91 (repr. in *Prester John*, ed. by Beckingham and Hamilton)

⁸⁰ A persuasive hypothesis that the letter was produced in the circle of Frederick Barbarossa is put forward by Hamilton in ‘Prester John and the Three Kings’, pp. 171-85.

located the lands of the Priest-King, and cartographers continued to situate these on maps.⁸¹

As Hamilton has shown, the *Letter of Prester John* combines details from an anonymous tract on a visit of the Patriarch of the Indians to Calixtus II, details from the *Acts of Thomas*, fantastical beasts and monstrous peoples from the Alexander legends and topoi relating to the terrestrial paradise with a great deal of imagination in order to create a picture of a tripartite India, watered by the paradisiacal Phison, as a fabulously wealthy land, rich in marvels, populated by strange peoples and wild animals, heathens, Saracens and Christians, yet all ruled by a Christian Priest-King.⁸² Prester John's land boasts youth-giving springs and stones that turn water into wine.⁸³ Justice in Prester John's Indies is achieved via a direct link with the divine: judgements are delivered miraculously by the hand of St. Thomas himself. Similarly, on his annual feast day communion is offered from the hand of the saint, who has the miraculous power of withholding it from anyone unworthy.⁸⁴ The Indies of the letter, its accruals, interpolations and translations is a utopian land in which state and Church are indissolubly and harmoniously linked in the person of the Priest-King, in which the absolute justice of God prevails, and in which anxieties about the fitness of priests to celebrate and worshippers to take communion are obviated by the direct and highly visible involvement the divine in these processes.

1.2.2.4 The legendary melting-pot

The influence of legends on later medieval western perceptions of India was pervasive and abiding. All three sets of legends outlined here circulated both in Latin and in Italian, French and English vernaculars. Although their influence on the representations of India in the *descriptiones orbis*, whose classical descriptions

⁸¹ Marco Polo identifies Prester John as 'Unc' (Ong) Khan, and reports him as killed by Ghengis in battle: Yule-Cordier, I, 244. Jordanus places the land of Prester John in India Tertia, which he identifies with Ethiopia: *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 119. In 1489 Henricus Martellus Germanus situated the lands of Prester John in the north easterly portion of his mappamundi, beyond the plotted lands taken from Ptolemy's *Geographia*. For the World Map in his *Insularum illustratum*, BL, Add. 15760, fols. 68v-69r (Fig. 8).

⁸²All the sources were available in the Latin West by the mid-twelfth century: Hamilton, 'Prester John and the Three Kings', p. 179.

⁸³ *Der Priester Johannes*, Interpolation E. For the marvellous stones see 915; for the fountain see Interpolation C, p. 920.

⁸⁴ The issuing of communion from the hand of St. Thomas derives from the 'De adventu patriarchae Indorum ad Urbem sub Calisto Papa II' and the account of the visit of an Indian Archbishop to Calixtus II by Odo of Rheims: *Der Priester Johannes*, pp. 841-42, 846.

proved resistant to later legendary accruals, was minimal, on maps and in historical and imaginative literature they proved an influential force. Forced by the cartographic necessity of situating information and places side by side on a single sheet of parchment, representations of India on *mappaemundi* did indeed mingle items from different traditions. The twelfth-century so-called ‘Jerome’ map of Asia, possibly copied from an early medieval original, for example, divides India into three parts: ‘India superior’, ‘India inferior’, ‘India ultima’, a division related to the tradition of the evangelisation of India. On the same map, features such as the biblical Ophir and classical elements such as the city of Nysa show that knowledge of the Indies from a variety of separate traditions have, due to the requirements of the plane surface, converged into a single but composite representation.⁸⁵

The legendary India created and perpetuated by the continued interaction of these legendary elements, Lach’s ‘medieval dream’, was continually remade through repeated textual reworkings throughout the later Middle Ages. Eventually, intertextual exchange between the shifting body of legends outlined here and the Indies of travel account genres results in a fictionalised landscape that all writers and readers can imaginatively penetrate, as may be seen in the voyages of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century fictional travellers including John de Mandeville and Jacopo da Sanseverino discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

1.3 Conclusion

By 1300, then, literate communities in Italy, France and England were subject to a mass of sometimes conflicting themes and trends in representations of India. India was a single unit in reworkings of classical descriptions, bipartite in the *Acts of Thomas* and on some maps, tripartite in histories of the apostles, the legend of Prester John and on other maps. Few texts followed the Plinian tradition of presenting Indian urban civilisation to any great extent, whereas many offered accounts of wild beasts and wild, monstrous, morally strange peoples. Very often these same texts offer accounts of India’s Brahmans and Gymnosophists, whose

⁸⁵ London, BL, Add 10049, fol. 64; reproduced and discussed, along with a reproduction of the map of Palestine in the same manuscript (which includes, confusingly, an ‘India Egipti’ and an ‘India Ethiopie’) by Evelyn Edson in *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed their World* (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 26-30. The legends of both maps are transcribed in Konrad Miller, *Mappaemundi: Die ältesten Weltkarten*, 6 vols (Stuttgart: Roth, 1895-98), 3, 1-21.

devotion to asceticism and virtuous, chaste lives came to be considered exemplary.⁸⁶ Sometimes India is presented as a Christian utopia, its physical proximity to paradise emphasised by the bountiful river of paradise, the Phison (identified as the Ganges), which brings sweet odours, precious stones, and the leaves and branches of marvellously ornate or oversize trees through its territories, and its spiritual proximity to God indicated by the physical intervention of St. Thomas in its ecclesiastical and legal affairs.⁸⁷ India is an unknown place. At the edge of the known world, it is, in imaginative terms, a shifting and unfixed place, in which anyone may situate strange and mysterious places and peoples, and conduct imaginary journeys through legendary wastes to mythical mountains, palaces, gardens or islands. Finally, if it is a place that for many writers has little spatial-geographical specificity, still less is it conceived of as a place in a temporal world, acted upon by time and history. The peoples, regions and cities recounted by Megasthenes, when they are included into the discussions of later medieval authors, are spoken of in the present tense.

At the moment, then, when in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries, travellers' accounts of subcontinental India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the peninsula of Indochina and the Indian Ocean began to be written and disseminated in the Latin West, the expectations with which travellers and readers would have approached a real or a textual 'India' or 'Indies' were multiple and shifting. Both the term and the place denoted carried for the West multiple, changing, and context-dependent significations.

Edward Said's term 'imaginative geography', though coined in relation to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'Orientalism', appropriately characterises the nature of this shifting, associatively linked body of knowledge outlined in this chapter, and thus forms one of the important conceptual tools for this thesis. The body of knowledge in question is of a type purportedly related to a conception of space, and yet its spatial conception is often unspecific. Like Said's conception of

⁸⁶ For the virtuous pagan topos in literature and philosophy, and the relationship of this debate to the neopelagianism, see Thomas Hahn, 'The Indian Tradition in Western Medieval Intellectual History', *Viator*, 9 (1978), 213-34.

⁸⁷ See the river in the narrative of the journey of three monks to the terrestrial paradise and in the *Iter ad Paradisum* of Alexander: Howard Rollin Patch, *The Other World According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 165-66; p. 157.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imaginative geography, characterised by ‘certain associations with the East — not quite ignorant, not quite informed’, it is vague and associative rather than exact and specifically located.⁸⁸ As several scholars have pointed out, however, Said’s concept of imaginative geography is not without problems, and these problems therefore need to be addressed briefly here.⁸⁹ Of particular difficulty is Said’s unresolved distinction between ‘imaginative geography’ and ‘positive geography’, the latter of which he appears to think of as having a potential or actual existence distinct from imaginative geography.⁹⁰ However, as Makdisi and others have noted, the distinction between the concept of imaginative geography and that of positive geography is never unambiguously clarified by Said, who makes only the provisional statement (‘for the time being’) that ‘it [imaginative geography] is there as something *more* than what appears to be merely positive knowledge’ (original emphasis). The accusation that an accurate body of positive knowledge about place is an unrealisable concept has thus been justifiably levelled at Said’s rather irresolute formulation. For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note at this stage that accepting the concept of imaginative geography does not necessitate an acceptance of the actual existence of positive geography. In fact, this thesis will shed some light on the relationship of imaginative geography to the ideal of positive geography: an ideal that evidently shaped the expectations with which historians of geography such as Kimble (Introduction, 1) approached later-medieval writing about the world. Leaving to one side for the moment (until Chapter 6), the problem of positive geography, this study will, through its analysis of the interaction between an already existing body of shifting, associative imaginative knowledge and new (though not necessarily ‘positive’) information supplied by travellers’ accounts, investigate the dynamic left vague by Said — that of ‘whether [...] imaginative knowledge infuses history and geography, or whether it in some way overrides them’ — and will offer some conclusions

⁸⁸ The concept is discussed in most detail in Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 55, from which section all quotations here are taken.

⁸⁹ The critical positions are succinctly summarised in Makdisi, ‘Reflections on “Imaginative Geography”’, in *Race Critical Theories*, ed. by Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 437-40 (esp. p. 440). For a good overview of Said’s concept of Orientalism and the positions of its critics, see A. L. Macfie, *Orientalism* (Longman: Harlow, 2002), esp. pp. 73-147.

⁹⁰ ‘There are such things as positive history and positive geography’: Said, *Orientalism*, p. 55.

concerning the precise nature of some of the processes that, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, inhibit the production and transmission of positive geography.⁹¹

⁹¹ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 55. There is much debate over the extent to which travellers' perceptions and thus their accounts were governed by their preconceptions. Partha Mitter's scholarship perhaps represents the most extreme of anti-positivist views, according to which travellers' saw and therefore recorded almost entirely what they expect to see: Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1977), pp. 1-31 (esp. p. 5). For an objection to this position, see Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology*, p. 37.

Chapter 2: Envoys, Missionaries, Merchants: East-West Contacts and Travels in the Late Middle Ages

2.1 Introduction: the routes of traders and missionaries

It has long been a scholarly commonplace that, in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries, a number of conditions coincided that fostered an increased level of direct East-West trade, and rendered possible Latin missionary activity in the Far East and Southern Asia. Although many scholars now question the historical concept of a *pax mongolica* that ensured the complete safety of the road to Cathay in this period, nevertheless it is clear that conditions for travel between Western Europe and Asia became more favourable between the later thirteenth and earlier fourteenth centuries.¹ During this period, a great tract of Asia stretching from eastern Anatolia to Iran was under the sway of the Persian Il-Khans, whose general friendliness towards European merchants went some way towards ensuring their safety.² The point of European — specifically Italian — trade across Central Asia is perhaps best represented by the oft-quoted judgement of the Florentine banker Francesco Pegolotti in his guide to commerce, the *Pratica della mercatura*, in which he writes, citing the first-hand evidence of travellers, that the main overland route to Cathay via Tana, Urgenj and Almalik was, by the 1330s secure, well-travelled and, except during succession disputes, free of open warfare.³

During this period of relative freedom of movement, western merchants, swiftly followed by missionaries, were able to make direct contact with the Indian subcontinent and the islands of the Indian Ocean in a way that had not previously been possible. Due to a long-standing but intermittently enforced papal prohibition

¹ For example, J.R.S. Philips in his readable outline history of East-West contact summarises the *pax mongolica* as ‘somewhat overstated’: *The Medieval Expansion of Europe*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 76.

² R. S. Lopez, ‘European Merchants in the Medieval Indies: The Evidence of Commercial Documents’, *Journal of Economic History*, 3 (1942), 164-84 (p. 173). See also Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 106-36.

of trade in the lands of the Sultan of Egypt, traders and missionaries travelling either east towards China or south east towards India in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries took, for the most part, the more northerly route via the Black Sea and, at least in part, overland (see Appendix 2, map 1). To travel on the most northerly routes (via Saraï, Urgenj and Samarkand either to Karakorum or Khanbalik (Peking); southwards via Urgenj to Delhi), voyagers disembarked at Tana on the northerly coast of the Sea of Azov. To take the sea route to India and Southern China, they disembarked at Trebizond, travelling, depending on current local political conditions, to Hormuz either overland or via the Red Sea.⁴ Along all these trading routes, there grew up *loca* of Franciscan and Dominican friars, serving the double function of mission stations and outposts to support the spiritual needs of mercantile communities.⁵ It is within this context of interdependent mercantile and ecclesiastical expansion eastwards that the travels of both Marco Polo and the succession of Dominican and Franciscan missionaries who are known to have visited India between the 1290s and 1360s made their journeys.

2.2 The papacy, the mendicants and the medieval missions in Asia: principles and practice

The increase in the level of security of travel between the Mediterranean and Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the consequent growth of colonies of Genoese and Venetian merchants in the Near East and Central Asia, go some way towards explaining *how* missionary activity in southern Asia and the far East arose in this period. It does not, however, explain *why* this area became the focus of missionary activity at this time. In fact, the Asian missions of the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries were the product of a set of converging influences.

³ Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della mercatura*, ed. by Allan Evans (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), p. 22.

⁴ Jean Richard, *La Papauté et les missions d'orient au moyen âge (XIII-XV siècles)*, Collection de l'école française de Rome, 33 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1977), map at p. 298.

⁵ Major missionary and mercantile stations for western (usually Genoese and, to a lesser extent, Venetian) merchants and missionaries included Tabriz, Saraï and Almalik, and Urgenj. Loenertz makes the observation that the main Dominican convents of Pera, Caffa, Trebizond and Chios are also the major maritime bases of the Genoese maritime empire in the East. He further suggests that the Dominican missionary structure in North West Persia was 'calquée' ['traced'] on the pre-existing Genoese mercantile infrastructure: R. Loenertz, *La Société des frères pèlerins: étude sur l'Orient Dominicain I*, Institutum historicum FF. Praedicatorum Romae ad S. Sabinae Dissertationes historicae, fasc. VII (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1937) p. 31. See Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 94-95 for the growth of Franciscan *loca* along missionary routes.

Practical factors no doubt included the increased ease of travel and trade already outlined above; political influences included the requirement for diplomatic contact with the newly-powerful Mongol states; theological influences included the eschatologically motivated drive to convert the remaining *gentes* of the world to Christianity in what were thought to be the last days, and thus to precipitate the conversion of the Jews and the second coming. To fully clarify this context, which made a significant impact on the tone, purpose, content and, in some cases, audience, of the texts that the missionaries produced, it is necessary to briefly outline the political and theological forces that drove the eastern missions, and thus underlie the missionaries' texts.

The ideological and theological purposes of the activities of the Franciscan and Dominican orders in the East, of which the mission in India formed just one part, can be clearly identified in the foundational bull *Cum hora undecima*, first issued by Pope Gregory IX in 1235. In this bull, which, as its opening line suggests, was strongly influenced by a belief in an impending apocalypse, Gregory sets out the Church's requirement that 'spiritual men [possessing] purity of life and the gift of intelligence should go forth with John [the Baptist] again to all men and all peoples of every tongue and in every kingdom to prophesy' in order that the multitude of nations ('plenitudo gentium') should be converted to Christianity in order to render possible the conditions for the conversion of the remnant of Israel, necessary for the events predicted for the Apocalypse to be fulfilled.⁶ The bull, which provided the licence and framework for Franciscan and Dominican preaching activity, was re-issued, sometimes with minor amendments, on six occasions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in each case reiterating the Franciscans' and Dominicans' specific mandate to convert the as yet unconverted pagans.⁷

⁶ 'Cum hora undecima sit diei hominibus, ut exeant ad opus usque ad mundi vesperam deputati et illud Apocalypsis eulogium cito credatur cum matris Ecclesiae consolatione complendum, videlicet oportere viros spiritualis vitae munditiam et intelligentia gratiam cum Iohanne sortitos populis et gentibus, linguis regibusque multis denuo prophetare, quod non sequitur reliquiriarum Israel per Isiam prophetata salvatio, nisi iuxta Paulum Apostolum prius introeat gentium plenitudo...'. Quoted and translated in James Muldoon, 'The Avignon Papacy and the Frontiers of Christendom: The Evidence of Vatican Register 62', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 17 (1979), 125-95 (repr. in Muldoon, *Canon Law, the Expansion of Europe, and World Order*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, 612 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998)), p. 143; n. 33.

⁷ In a 1253 version of the bull issued to the Dominicans, the Tartars are added. Indians are first mentioned in the bull of 1245: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 139, n. 66.

Cum hora undecima set out the Holy See's eschatological framework, according to which missionary activity in the East was imperative to humankind's fulfilment of its scriptural destiny. The missionary activity itself, however, was carried out by the mendicant orders.⁸ On a practical level, missionaries could be sent to the East directly as legates by the pope: such was the case with the mission of the Franciscan Giovanni da Pian del Carpine to the camp of the Great Khan at Karakorum in 1245. More commonly, however, missionaries would be sent by the Franciscan and Dominican orders specifically licensed by *Cum hora undecima* and sometimes other bulls to send members of their orders to preach in the East.⁹ By 1292, the Franciscan order administered its missions via two vicariates for Northern Tartary ('Tartaria aquilonis') and Eastern Tartary ('Tartaria orientalis'), both of which were subject to its Vicar 'in partibus orientis', and to which its eastern convents and smaller mission posts (*loca*) were subject. Later, the Vicariate of Cathay was established, covering the Franciscan mission in what was then Cathay and Manzi (Northern and Southern China).¹⁰ The Dominican missionary effort was organised rather differently. In 1312, the Order established a *Societas fratrum peregrinantium propter Christum inter gentes*, to which its eastern convents and *loca* were attached. Friars who volunteered or were assigned for duty in the East were detached from their own provinces and attached to the *Societas*, whose principal convents were those of Pera and Caffa.¹¹

⁸ The mendicant orders' theories and concepts of their missionary purpose are beyond the scope of this thesis. For the Dominicans, a good discussion appears in Loenertz; for the Franciscans, see E. Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

⁹ The Franciscans received a general licence from the Pope to preach 'inter Tartaros' in 1288: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 132. Letters requesting unnamed addressees not to obstruct the preaching of the Dominicans to the 'infideles' and giving preachers certain extra powers were issued in 1333 by John XXII: *Lettres communes*, ed. by G. Mollat, 16 vols (Paris: Boccard, 1905-47), 12, p. 219, no. 61259 (10 August 1333) and 13, p. 2, 61338 (6 Sept. 1333). The latter specifically refers to the land of the Indians, amongst many other locations.

¹⁰ Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 128-29; see also Appendix 2, Map 1.

¹¹ The earliest reference to the *Societas* is, according to its most assiduous scholar, a reference to *Fratres euntes ad gentes* in 1304, whereas the full name of the society is first documented in 1312: Loenertz., *La Société*, p. 3. Loenertz also specifies that the *societas* was wholly Dominican and not an instance of collaboration between the Franciscans and Dominicans. Mundadan and Richard both also indicate the establishment, somewhat later, of a *societas* with the same name among the Franciscans: A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1, (Bangalore: Published for Church History Association of India by Theological Publications in India, 1982), I, 121; Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 128-30, esp. p. 129, n. 26.

By the early fourteenth century, the two mendicant orders operated, then, using a well-developed infrastructure for the administration of missionary activity. The relationship of the papacy to these orders and the level of papal involvement in missionary activity in this period appears, however, to have been both less structured and less consistent. Indeed, an outline of papal activity with regard to the missions from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries shows a practice that develops along rather more practical lines often not completely consistent with the apocalyptic missionary ideology outlined in *Cum hora undecima*.

The missionary activities in the East of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, of which the mission to India formed just one part, effectively began in 1245 when Innocent IV dispatched three delegations of friars into Mongol-controlled lands, each carrying papal letters.¹² However, from the letters as well as the attendant circumstances it is clear that the plan was as much a diplomatic as a missionary enterprise. At a time when Mongol armies had made significant incursions into Eastern and Central Europe, Innocent IV had begun to fully realise the danger that these peoples, once unified, might pose to Western Europe. Consequently, Innocent turned his attention to an attempt to treat with and convert their leaders which, it was hoped, would swiftly bring about the Christianisation of their peoples. Thus the letters that Innocent sent to the Great Khan (or the ‘King of the Tartars’, as he termed their emperor) contained an exposition of Christian doctrine, a statement of the papal desire for the salvation of the Great Khan’s soul, and a request that he ‘desist entirely from assaults [such as Eastern and Central Europe had suffered at Mongol hands] and especially from the persecution of Christians’.¹³ The aim of Innocent’s mission was thus twofold: to bring as many sheep as possible into the fold of the Catholic church, and to safeguard the lives of Christians living under the threat of Mongol invasions by negotiating a peace with the Great Khan. Of these two

¹² The relation between these three missions is confusing. It seems that Innocent IV first sent the Franciscan Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, with several accompanying friars, but after his departure seems to have changed his mind and entrusted the same mission and letters to the Dominicans Ascelino da Cremona and André de Longjumeau. In the event André handed his letters to Baiju, Khan of Greater Armenia, north-west Persia and the former Seljuk sultanate of Konya, and Ascelino and his companions reached Baiju’s summer camp, from which the Pope’s letters were dispatched to the Great Khan. Giovanni da Pian del Carpine reached Karakorum in 1246, and failed to obtain the submission to the pope’s requests of the new Great Khan Güyük. Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 70-76.

¹³ Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980; first published as *The Mongol Mission* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955)), pp. 73-76 (p. 76).

aims, however, the text of the letters leaves very little doubt that the latter was the reason why the Pope, who had never previously shown great interest in Mongol souls, suddenly developed such a profound concern for their salvation.

The failure of Innocent's papal diplomatic mission of 1245 appears to have led to an almost complete cessation of such papal diplomatic-missionary activity for a period of 25 years.¹⁴ Sporadic and isolated diplomatic missions to the Mongol Khans occurred later in the thirteenth century, but documentation of papal approval and support for these is conspicuously absent. When André de Longjumeau travelled eastward in search of Güyük Khan in 1249 it was in the service of Louis of France.¹⁵ When the Franciscan missionary William of Rubruck travelled in 1253 from the court of Louis of France to the court of Batu, the Khan of the Golden Horde, at Sarai, and from there to the court of the Great Khan Möngke at Karakorum, he did so as an ambassador of neither Louis nor of the Pope, but insisted upon his status as a preacher.¹⁶ A level of caution towards Eastern missionary enterprises on the part of the papacy is also indicated by the apparent response of Gregory X to the request, made in about 1270, by Niccolò and Maffeo Polo in their capacities as ambassadors for Qubilai Khan, to send 100 scholars to teach the Khan Christian doctrine. The Dominicans William of Tripoli and Niccolò da Vicenza apparently sent as a response to this request soon turned back.¹⁷

Papal records of the Eastern missions that took place in the later thirteenth and into the fourteenth century give an impression of these being, like the unsuccessful diplomatic mission of William of Tripoli and Niccolò da Vicenza, *ad hoc* in their nature rather than part of a global political strategy such as that of the 1245 mission. The final, most significant and most successful missionary endeavour of the thirteenth century is that of Giovanni da Montecorvino to Khanbalik. Giovanni had previously travelled and preached widely in the East before returning to Italy in

¹⁴ Friar Giovanni failed to obtain the submission of Güyük, who in fact sent word by Giovanni demanding the submission of the Pope and all western princes: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 72. Although Ascelino's party did bring letters back to the pope, negotiations came to nothing: *BBB*, I (1906), 213.

¹⁵ Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 76.

¹⁶ Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. XXI.

¹⁷ Richard accepts, irrespective of the lack of Chinese documentary support, the testimony of Marco concerning the status of Maffeo and Niccolò Polo as ambassadors of Qubilai in this matter: *La Papauté*, pp. 84-85.

1289.¹⁸ It appears to have been this event that spurred Pope Nicholas IV to send Giovanni as a legate to Hayton II of Armenia, the Il-Khan Arghun of Persia and to the Great Khan Qubilai. Although, according to Nicholas' letter to Qubilai, assurances of Arghun concerning Qubilai's tolerance of and interest in Christianity had led the Pope to hope for his conversion, either the cautious nature of that optimism or the small resources that the papacy was willing to devote to the task is indicated by the small number of missionaries sent, with the result that only Giovanni and his lay merchant companion, Pietro da Lucalongo, survived the journey.¹⁹

As Jean Richard has noted, then, the collection of disparate embassies and missions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that are generally termed 'the eastern missions' for ease of reference rather than due to any essential ideological or conceptual unity are perhaps better viewed as a series of *ad hoc* improvisations, rather than as an ideologically and practically unified programme:

It is with the return of one missionary or another, bringing news of his area of evangelisation, or with the arrival of one of the 'edifying letters' by means of which a Montecorvino, a Jordanus or a vicar of the Franciscans of Northern Tartary makes known his work and his appeals for help that it is decided, at the curia, to erect a diocese, an ecclesiastical province, or to authorise a contingent of missionaries from one or another Order. All of this gives an impression of improvisation, as much as of a shortage of information.²⁰

To proceed upon this assumption, then, gives rise to the question of where in this schema fitted the activities of missionaries in India at the end of the thirteenth century and in the early part of the fourteenth.

¹⁸ *BBB*, I, 302.

¹⁹ Giovanni set out with one colleague who died at Camerino. At Tabriz he met the Dominican Niccolò da Pistoia who accompanied him, along with the merchant Pietro da Lucalongo, as far as eastern India, where Niccolò died: Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 145-46.

²⁰ 'C'est avec le retour de tel ou tel missionnaire apportant des nouvelles de son terrain d'évangélisation, ou avec l'arrivée de quelqu'une de ces "lettres édifiantes" par lesquelles un Montecorvino, un Jourdain de Séverac ou un vicaire des Franciscains de Tartarie Aquilonaire fait connaître son labeur et ses appels à l'aide, que l'on se décide, à la Curie, à ériger un diocèse, une province ecclésiastique, ou à autoriser l'envoi d'un contingent de missionnaires par l'un ou l'autre Ordre. Tout ceci donne une impression d'improvisation comme d'une insuffisance de l'information': Richard, 'Les Papes d'Avignon et l'évangélisation du monde non-Latin à la veille du Grande Schisme' in *Genèse et débuts du Grande Schisme d'Occident*, Avignon, 25-27 sept. 1978 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), pp. 305-15 (repr. in Richard, *Croisés, missionnaires et voyageurs : les perspectives orientales du monde latin médiéval* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1983)), p. 307.

2.2.1 The friars and the Indian missions

The activity of late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth Franciscan and Dominican friars in India presents an interesting case when set against the wider background of missionary activities in the East outlined in the previous section. There is no evidence that either the papacy, the Franciscan missionary hierarchy, or later, the Dominican Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Sultanieh (est. 1318), into whose remit India then fell, planned to evangelise in the subcontinent. Because, until the extension of the Delhi Sultanate's dominion into Gujarāt and Kanbhāya in the west and into the east and south as far as Tilang carried out by the Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī between 1297 and 1311, the Indian subcontinent did not boast a ruler as powerful, imperially-minded and thus as threatening as the Mongol Khans, the region does not appear to have been an area of priority action for a papacy primarily concerned to avert military threats with diplomatic missionary activity.²¹

Consequently, the first recorded visit of a missionary to the region, that of Giovanni da Montecorvino in 1289, seems to have occurred by accident. On his journey as a papal legate to the court of the Great Khan at Khanbalik, Giovanni was obliged to make a detour due to fighting between the forces of Qubilai and Qaidu on the overland route to Cathay, resulting in him taking the longer sea route via India.²² From the vicinity of the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Maabar (known from other sources to be Mylapore, near modern Chennai/Madras), Giovanni wrote a letter describing the country and the manners of its peoples. From the single surviving copy of this, and from the letters he sent over twelve years later from Khanbalik, it appears that he baptized between 100 and 150 persons during his thirteen months in India.²³ It is noteworthy, however, that Giovanni's advice, sent from Khanbalik, that 'it would be of great profit to preach the Christian faith to them [Indian peoples] if friars would come' seems to have yielded no result with the Vicars of the Dominican and Franciscan orders and the brethren of both in Persia to whom it was sent, as there is no clear evidence of significant further Franciscan or

²¹ Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 193-216; Richard, 'Les missionnaires latins dans l'Inde au XIVe siècle', *Studi veneziani*, 12 (1970), 231-42 (p. 235).

²² Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 145.

²³ The second letter of Giovanni da Montecorvino, translated in *Mission to Asia*, ed. Dawson, pp. 224-27 (p. 224). Giovanni's letters are edited in *SF*, I, 340-75.

Dominican missionary activity in India until the arrival of Jordanus Catalani in 1321.²⁴

2.2.2 Jordanus Catalani and the Dominican mission in India

The Dominican Jordanus Catalani de Sévérac, who set out from Hormuz in 1320 with four Franciscan fellow-missionaries, including the experienced missionary Tommaso da Tolentino, apparently with the intention of joining an already-existing Franciscan mission in Zayton (Chü'an-chou; subject to the Archbishopric of Khanbalik), is the first member of either of the mendicant missionary orders recorded to have undertaken a long-term mission in India.²⁵ Jordanus and his Franciscan companions, however, soon underwent an experience that immediately raised the profile of missionary activity in this neglected region. All the surviving narratives that deal with this episode agree that the friars broke their journey at Tana (Thāne on the island of Salsette, near modern Mumbai), where they were hosted by Christians of the local Eastern Christian population.²⁶ Following a dispute amongst the Christians hosting the Friars, their presence is said to have been drawn to the attention of an official, the 'Melic' of the ruling Sultan of Delhi, Ghiyāth al-Dīn,

²⁴ A possible contradiction to this appears in Jordanus' descriptive account of India, the *Mirabilia descripta*, in which he claims that four Franciscans and five Dominicans were martyred in India 'in my time' ('meo tempore'): Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 123. The Franciscans mentioned are undoubtedly those martyred at Tana, near modern Mumbai, in 1321, discussed in the next section. Of the Dominicans no record appears elsewhere: *BBB*, II (1913), 339.

²⁵ According to Richard, following Golubovich, the five were travelling to China together: *La Papauté*, p. 151. The detail is not mentioned in the letters of Jordanus himself, or those of his superiors, concerning the events. In the *Chronicon XXIV generalium*, composed prior to 1360, which contains one of the fullest accounts of events and includes a number of details not present in other sources, it is only mentioned that the travellers are going to Polumbum together: *AF*, III, XIII-XXIV, VIII, 474-79 (p. 474).

²⁶ See Appendix 2, Map 1. Sea travellers in this period could expect to change ships, waiting for the monsoon season to shift, normally in either Khanbāya or Quilon in order to round Sri Lanka and travel onwards to the east coast of India or to Indonesia. Tana was a lesser changeover port than Khanbāya, but was also used by Odorico ten years later: K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 38-41. Communities of Eastern Christians, technically subject to the patriarch of Selucia-Ctesiphon but in practice often isolated during the Middle Ages, have lived in South India since at least the sixth century. Local traditions as well as European legends attribute the Christianisation of India to St. Thomas, but whereas European legends place his sphere of activity in north west India (the region ruled by Gundopharnes between AD16 and at least AD 45), Indian sources place it in Kerala and the Coromandel Coast. The region around Tana is not, however, unlike Kerala, a region known for a long tradition of Christianity: Raymond le Coz, *L'Eglise d'Orient: Chrétiens d'Irak, d'Iran et de Turquie* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995), pp. 123, 242-44; Neill, *A History of Christianity*, pp. 28-33, 38.

founder of the Tughluk dynasty.²⁷ They were called before the official, and, in the course of the ensuing debate concerning their respective religions, the Franciscans appear to have offended against the beliefs of the Muslim élite by blaspheming against the Prophet. While Jordanus was absent from Tana, the offending Franciscans were, following a miraculously foiled attempt to burn them to death, martyred by the sword. The hagiographic accounts that swiftly began to circulate in Franciscan circles contained attestations, moreover, to yet more pre- and post-mortem miracles providing proof of their sanctity.²⁸ Following this experience, Jordanus spent some further time in the region of Gujarāt before moving on to Columbum (Quilon) in Kerala, a region with a particularly long and flourishing tradition of Eastern Christianity, attributed to the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle.²⁹ He remained in these regions until at least 1323, the date of his last letter to his brothers in Persia, at Tauris (Tabriz), Diagorgan (Dehikerkan) and Merga (Maragha), where convents or *loca* had been in existence since at least 1312.³⁰

The letters sent by Jordanus to his fellow-preachers in Persia reveal an extraordinary amount of practical detail concerning his apparently accidental mission to India. In addition to his claim to have baptized ninety people in Paroct (Broach or Bharuch, near the Gulf of Khanbāya), and thirty-two whilst travelling between Tana and Supera, Jordanus' letters reveal that he had identified potential *loca* in which further missionaries could take up residence:

Let friars prepare themselves to come, because there are places that I know in which friars could do much fruitful work and live together: one is Supera, where two friars could live, another is in Paroct, where two or three could stay, and another is in Columbum, although I have left out many others that I do not know.³¹

²⁷ A corruption of 'Malik', used sometimes to designate a king but sometimes, as in this instance, simply to designate the secular governor of an area.

²⁸ According to the versions of the story in the later-fourteenth-century *Chronicon XXIV generalium* Jordanus had gone via Supera (possibly to be identified with the Sūbāra of Idrisi, which he locates in the vicinity of Khanbāya in modern Gujarāt. *India and the Neighbouring Territories in the Kitab Nuzhat al-Mushtaq Fi'khtiraq al-Afaq of al-Sharif al-Idrisi*, ed. and trans. by S. Maqbul Ahmad (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 54), to administer baptism to a community of St. Thomas Christians at Paroct (Paroct; Broach): *AF*, III, 474; 498.

²⁹ Raymond le Coz, *L'Eglise d'Orient*, pp. 43-44.

³⁰ Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 170-71.

³¹ 'Parent se fratres ad veniendum, quia sunt loca in quibus fratres poterunt multum fructificare et comuniter vivere, que ego scio: unus est *Supera*, ubi duo fratres poterunt stare, alius est in *Parocto*, ubi starent duo vel tres, et alius est in *Colubij*, exceptis multis aliis que ignoro': Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 20.

From this letter, it is clear that any plans Jordanus might have had to travel to Southern China had been abandoned by 1321, and that by this stage he wished to establish several missionary outposts in areas of Northern India under the control of Ghiyāth al-Dīn. However, the response to Jordanus' call for friars appears to have been limited. One friar, Nicholas Romanus, is recorded to have set out for India, but the evidence of Jordanus' letter of 1323 suggests that neither Nicholas nor any other friars joined him in his enterprise.³²

The non-arrival of fellow-harvesters to aid Jordanus in his missionary work was probably responsible for his journey, at some point between 1323 and 1328, to the papal curia at Avignon. Not only did the pope have the authority to send friars on mission directly, thereby overriding the need for them to ask permission from their superiors, he was furthermore able to require the orders to provide missionaries.³³ Indeed, one such request from John XXII to the chapter meeting of the Dominicans at Toulouse for at least fifty friars, neither young nor old, to carry out mission amongst unspecified *gentes*, dates from the period of Jordanus' stay in Avignon.³⁴ Whilst Jordanus was in Avignon, John XXII created the bishopric of Columbum (Quilon), elevating Jordanus as its first incumbent, and composed papal letters introducing the new bishop to the Sultan of Delhi, a variety of southern Indian rulers, the leader of the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala, and, unaccountably, to the emperor of Cathay.³⁵

It was probably during his stay in Avignon that Jordanus wrote or dictated his serious and detailed but little-diffused treatise the *Mirabilia descripta* concerning the situation and peoples of India.³⁶ That the composition and content of the *Mirabilia descripta* strongly influenced the papal curia's decision to create the bishopric of

³² Jordanus' complaint reads: 'Igitur Fratres carissimi, ad vos faciem verto, & quod infelicem peregrinum consolari velitis, a sanctis Fratribus sociis derelictus, lacrymis perfusus precor. Veniant igitur Fratres sancti, veniant in patientia fundati, ut sic baptizatorum fructus a malo valeat praeservari': Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 27.

³³ Loenertz, *La Société*, p. 24.

³⁴ Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 134; *MOFPH*, IV, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, ed. by Benedict Maria Reichert, 9 vols (Rome: Polyglot, 1899-1904), II, 178.

³⁵ The list of intended recipients of papal letters is given in Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 39. The letter to the 'Lord' of the St. Thomas Christians is also printed, at pp. 40-41.

³⁶ I refer to Cordier's edition, already cited, throughout. Christine Gadrat's new edition and French translation of the work was published too late for use in the preparation of this thesis: *Une Image de l'Orient au XIV^e siècle: les mirabilia descripta de Jordan Catala de Sévérac*, Mémoires et documents de l'École des Chartes (Paris: École des Chartes, 2005).

Columbum and install Jordanus as its incumbent is beyond question.³⁷ The bull with which Jordanus is sent to his see refers to the Dominican as ‘having found out in person and by experience the situation and character of those regions’.³⁸ What is more unusual, however, is the rare incidence of the penetration of new information from this work, however temporarily, into ecclesiastical geography. The place name ‘Molephatam’, evidently pertaining to a region on the Malabar coast, is found only in the papal recommendation of Jordanus and in Jordanus’ own treatise, the *Mirabilia descripta*.³⁹ The kingdom of Columbum, the Sultan of Delhi, and the inhabitants of Gujerāt are also referred to both in the papal letters and Jordanus’ treatise.

No further letters from Jordanus to fellow-friars or to the papal curia at Avignon survive. It is therefore impossible to ascertain whether or not Jordanus ever returned to his see. It seems likely that he set out in 1330, as he is not heard of again in Europe after this time. The number of friars that travelled to India with Jordanus is not known, but the papal letters of recommendation sent with Jordanus refer to friars in the plural.⁴⁰ Documentary evidence concerning Jordanus’ bishopric drops away at this point. Giovanni da Marignolli, who travelled as a papal legate overland to Cathay and back to Europe by the sea-route around India between 1338 and 1353, recorded the existence of a Latin Church of St. George at Jordanus’s see of Columbum, which he claimed to have decorated with wall-paintings of his own making.⁴¹ Giovanni does not date his arrival, which, calculating from the dates he gives and his estimation of time spent in Khanbalik is likely to have been around 1345/6. He makes no mention of a bishop or even a bishopric, and yet does make an incidental reference to ‘fratres’ of an unspecified order living in the region.⁴²

³⁷ Christine Gadrat, ‘Jordan Catala de Sévérac’, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, 42 (2002), 269-79 (p. 271).

³⁸ ‘conditiones et qualitates illarum partium presentialiter et palpabiliter expertus’: Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 36.

³⁹ Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 39; p. 119.

⁴⁰ The bull in which Jordanus is recommended to the St. Thomas Christians of the region (termed ‘Nascarini’ in the bull, a contemporary Arab designation for Christians) exhorts their leader to welcome the ‘aforementioned bishop and brothers, who, not without great difficulty and danger come to those parts’ (‘praefatus episcopus & fratres, non absque magnis laboribus & periculis [...] ad partes illas accedunt’): Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 41.

⁴¹ Giovanni da Marignolli’s recollections were digressions in his Chronicle of Bohemia, which survived in full in only one copy: *SF*, I, 524-59; translated by Yule in *Cathay*, III, 207.

⁴² ‘Inde valefaciens fratribus post annum et quatuor menses’: *SF*, I, 531.

Jordanus' death appears to have passed unannounced at the papal curia, and his bishopric was consequently allowed to peter out quietly.⁴³ Bearing in mind the papacy's sporadic involvement with and interest in mission, however, this should not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the missions in India died out at the same time. In addition to the rather unreliable evidence of Giovanni da Marignolli concerning unspecified 'fratres' in India in the 1340s, it is also known that the *Societas peregrinantium* continued to send friars *inter gentes* into the later 1330s — so much so in fact that their wanderings caused certain disciplinary problems for the Dominican order. Thus in 1335, all existing letters showing friars to belong to the *Societas* were annulled due to perceived abuses by friars using them to evade discipline in their own provinces. Each prior was then required instead to select six appropriate friars to be attached to the *Societas* and sent *inter gentes*.⁴⁴ No evidence exists, however, to indicate their destinations.

2.2.3 Odorico da Pordenone, the *Relatio*, and the eastern missions

The travels of Odorico da Pordenone (d. 1331) in the early fourteenth century resulted from a combination of the apocalyptic missionary ideology, the favourable economic conditions and the developing practical infrastructure outlined above.⁴⁵ Odorico travelled to Khanbalik, via the sea route around India (Appendix 2, Map 1), between 1317 and 1330.⁴⁶ Although Richard indicates that Odorico travelled in the capacity of a papal legate, a statement that has often been repeated without

⁴³ Richard notes a reference to an *episcopus Columbensis* in letters of indulgence given at Avignon in 1363-64, but states that this may well have been a titular see only: *La Papauté*, p. 192.

⁴⁴ *MOFPH*, IV, *Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis praedicatorum*, II, 232.

⁴⁵ Biographical information on Odorico is available in Yule's English translation of the text but is in some points now outdated: *Cathay*, II, 3-35; source list at 3-93. A collection of wide-ranging and informative studies is available in *Odorico da Pordenone e la Cina*, Atti del convegno storico internazionale, Pordenone, 28-29 maggio 1982, ed. by G. Melis (Pordenone: Concordia sette, 1984). The fullest biography available in English is still that of A.C. Moule, 'A life of Odoric of Pordenone', *T'oung Pao*, 22 (1921), 275-90. More recently, see Alvise Andreose's edition of an Italian vernacular translation of the *Relatio*, *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose* (Padua: Centro studi antoniani, 2000), pp. 30-43. In view of the availability of sources on this subject, and of the dependence of many of the accepted or suggested biographical details upon later hagiographic accounts of the Beatus' life that emphasise Odorico's conformity to hagiographic types, I do not repeat these details here. For such hagiographic details and their sources see *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 32-33 and Moule, 'A life', 277-90.

⁴⁶ The dates are established by the latest reference to Odorico in Italy, witnessing a document in Porpetto on 24 March 1317, and the date that his *Relatio* itself gives for his return to Italy of 1330: *Libro delle nuove*, p. 31; *SF*, I, 38, 494.

examination, no independent evidence exists to support this.⁴⁷ In fact, the opening lines of Odorico's *Relatio*, in which it is probable that any credentials he had would have been set out, make no reference to any official position or obligation, only testifying to his free desire to 'gather a harvest of souls'.⁴⁸ It is likely, then, that the permission with which Odorico travelled was simply that of the 1288 general mandate and licence to the Franciscans to preach among the 'Tartars', issued by Nicholas IV.

Odorico travelled, possibly accompanied by several fellow-Franciscans, from Venice to Trebizond by ship.⁴⁹ From Trebizond he traveled overland via Tabriz, Sultanieh, Yezd and Baghdad to Hormuz on the Persian Gulf, the Franciscan *loca* on the way such as those of Tabriz and Sultanieh probably serving as stopping-points on his journey.⁵⁰ From Hormuz, he took, like the Dominican Jordanus and his Franciscan fellow-travellers, a ship to Tana.⁵¹ In his *Relatio*, Odorico claims to have collected the bones of the martyred Franciscan companions of Jordanus from their burial place in Tana, and to have carried them to the Franciscan convent at Zayton (Chü'an-chou, south-east China). This claim, if true, would place his arrival in Tana after 1323, in which year Jordanus, writing from the same city, recounts how he buried the martyrs' bones there himself.⁵² From Tana, Odorico travelled down the Malabar ('Minibar') coast, stopping near Calicut ('Flandrina'), at Kodungallur near Cochin ('Çinglin'), and at Quilon ('Polumbum').⁵³ Odorico discusses the customs of the people of Kerala in some detail, giving accounts of reverence towards the ox, of

⁴⁷ Richard cites Golubovich on this question, but Golubovich provides no evidence for his own assertions: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 132; *BBB*, III, 376. None of the early versions of the *Relatio* claims a mandate for travel from the Pope, and no scholar working on Odorico has yet unearthed a papal document naming Odorico as a legate.

⁴⁸ 'volens ire ut fructus aliquos lucrifacerem [*sic*] animarum': *SF*, I, 1, 413.

⁴⁹ Taken from his own itinerary. The detail that Odorico travelled with a certain James of Ireland, and two Venetian friars, Bernardo and Michelo, derives from Golubovich. However, his supposition is based on a single documentary mentions of these friars as companions of Odorico that do not refer to them specifically as fellow voyagers: *BBB*, III, 393.

⁵⁰ Both in existence by 1312: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 170.

⁵¹ 'Ornes' according to Wyngaert's edition: *SF*, I, 7, 422.

⁵² Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 26.

⁵³ See Appendix 2, Map 2. The majority of places visited by Odoric were definitively or plausibly identified by Henry Yule and Henri Cordier: *Cathay*, II. 'Flandrina' is probably a representation of the Arabic toponym 'Fandarīna', representing a now little-known port (Pandalāyani) north of Quilandi and Calicut in Kerala. 'Çinglin' is almost undoubtedly the 'Sinjlī' mentioned by several Arab geographers of the period, which has been identified with Kodungallūr (Cranganore): S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India* (University of Madras, 1942), pp. 34-35 and n; pp. 75-77 and n. .

idol-worship, which he supposes to include human sacrifice, and of *satī* (the self-immolation of widows on their husbands' pyres).⁵⁴ From Quilon, he appears to have rounded Cape Cormorin to the Coromandel Coast, to which he refers, in language indicating his reliance on Arab terminology as 'Mobar'.⁵⁵ Here he claims to have visited the church of St. Thomas, which would place him slightly north of Chennai (Madras).⁵⁶ Once again, Odorico offers a detailed report on customs that he attributes to this region. However, the description that he provides of an idol 'as big as St. Christopher' being held in great reverence and, on one day per year being wheeled around the town in a chariot, indicates that the friar may have had knowledge, possibly by report rather than first-hand acquaintance, of the annual festival of Lord Jagannātha at Puri (Orissa).⁵⁷ The final custom attributed to this region that Odorico describes in detail — in fact merging it with the festival of Jagannātha — is a rite in which worshippers slice themselves to pieces before an idol, and are held in reverence for so doing.⁵⁸

Following Odorico's account of his departure from mainland India, the narrative passes from Sumatra ('Lamori', to which he attributes naked, communally-living cannibals) to Java ('Iave'), whose inhabitants are by custom branded on the face), then on to a place, termed 'Paten' or 'Talamasin' (tentatively identified with

⁵⁴ *SF*, I, 10, 440-41.

⁵⁵ Known to Arab sailors and geographers as Ma'bar: Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, pp. 53-56.

⁵⁶ Odorico does not mention 'Mylapore' by name. The city is given the westernized but still recognisable name of 'Mirapolis' by Giovanni da Marignolli some years later (c. 1348-49): *SF*, I, 544; Yule-Cordier, II, 356.

⁵⁷ Lord Jagannātha was worshipped as a state deity particularly devoutly under the rule of king Bhānudeva II (1306-1328): H. Kulke, 'Jagannātha as State Deity under the Gajapatis of Orissa', in *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, ed. by Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978), pp. 199-221 (p. 203). Odorico asserts that year upon year many worshippers die by throwing themselves under the Lord's chariot. Given that he could have witnessed the ceremony once at a maximum and that he would be unlikely to be able to do so at close quarters, it is likely that his source was an oral report: *SF*, I, 11, 444.

⁵⁸ The merging of this report with that of the festival of Jagannātha, both only vaguely localised in the Coromandel region, suggests that Odorico's text here patches together reports, possibly his own or possibly those of sources, that may relate to different places. Reports of extreme devotional practices involving self-sacrifice before idols occur in both Marco's *Book* and the *Mirabilia descripta*. However, the popular thirteenth-century vernacular encyclopaedia the *Book of Sidrac* features some very similar reports which, like those of Odorico and Marco, attribute a direct declaration along the lines of 'I hereby offer myself to this God' to the devotee. Whether these accounts have a common source in eastern oral tales, or whether Odorico and Marco or their amanuenses have been influenced by *Sidrac* here is not possible to determine: *Divisament*, 174, pp. 556-57; *SF*, I, 7, 444; Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 117; *Il libro di Sidrach: Testo inedito del secolo XIV*, ed. by Aldolfo Bartoli (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1868), pp. 124; *Sidrak and Bokkus*, ed. by T. L. Burton and others, 2 vols, Early English Texts Society, O. S., 311-12 (Oxford: EETS, 1998), pp. xxi-lxxxv.

Borneo by some, with Bintan, Singapore by others).⁵⁹ In his account of this island, Odorico concentrates less on the description of peoples, discussing instead trees that produce flour (sago), wine, honey and poison, and asserting that a certain stone is found here that makes anyone who carries it invulnerable to iron. At this point, Odorico's itinerary begins to make less sense as a linear geographical progression (see maps 1 and 3). He claims to have sailed from 'Paten' to Zampa (Champa; an ancient kingdom of south and central Vietnam), and then to have sailed south, via 'many islands and countries, amongst which there was one called Nicuneran' (Nicobar).⁶⁰ Concerning Zampa, Odorico discusses the King's custom of polygamy and many children, the abundance of elephants there, and gives a confused account of a spawning season amongst the coastal fish, represented as a wonder. Odorico also attributes to Nicobar the dog-headed men (cenocephali) of legend, whom he represents, unusually, as an idolatrous people well-ruled by a justice-loving king.

Odorico's narrative then moves haphazardly on to Syllam (Seilan; Sri Lanka), at which point he narrates the legend of Adam's exile there after the fall and, with scepticism, that of the lake of Adam and Eve's tears.⁶¹ From there the itinerary progresses southwards, to an unidentified island termed Dodin or Dondin. Glossing its name as meaning 'unclean', Odorico attributes to its natives a grisly custom of anthropophagic euthanasia in which the sick are killed and eaten by their relatives, of which he provides a somewhat lengthy description.⁶² From the islands of the Indian Ocean and Indonesia, Odoric then moves on to discuss 'Manzi' (Southern China).⁶³ He records visiting the Franciscan convent at Zayton and depositing the bones of the Tana martyrs there, before travelling northward via another Franciscan house at

⁵⁹ *SF*, I, 12-13, 445-50. Wyngaert's edition has 'Paten' and 'Malamasini', but I have used the more usual 'Talamasin', which Wyngaert lists as a variant: *SF*, I, 13, 447. See Appendix 2, Map 3 for South East Asian toponyms.

⁶⁰ '[...] navigans per mare oceanum versus meridiem reperii multas insulas et contratas, quarum una est que vocatur Nicuneram': *SF*, I, 15-16, 450-53 (16, p. 452).

⁶¹ *SF*, I, 17, 454-55.

⁶² *SF*, I, 18, 455-57. Yule has suggested tentatively that Dodin is to be identified with Andaman, but there is very little evidence to support this: *Cathay* II, p. 173, n. 2. Marco Polo's *Book* attributes the same custom to the people of Dragoiam (2.3.1). Odorico's account is, however, considerably more developed and includes an account of the friar's attempt (language barriers apparently forming no object) to dissuade the people from this custom.

⁶³ Giovanni da Marignolli calls this Manzi: *SF*, I, 543. Niccolò de' Conti terms it Macin in his 1430s description of the East to papal secretary Poggio Bracciolini. The term derives from Maha-Cin, meaning Great China and is generally given by inhabitants of India to China: *De l'Inde: les voyages en Asie de Niccolò de' Conti*, ed. by Michèle Guéret-Laferté (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 103, n. 63.

Quinsai (Hangzhou) to Khanbalik, where, according to his account, he remained for three years with the party of Franciscan friars established at the court of the Great Khan.⁶⁴ Odorico's route home is not specified. However, it appears to have taken him overland as indicated by the fact that the *Relatio* contains a chapter that describes Tibet.⁶⁵

2.2.4 Missionaries in India and the communication of information

However unplanned the travels of the majority of missionaries to India might have been in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the missions nevertheless impacted on the quality and type of information about the country available to the missionary hierarchy and the papal curia. I have mentioned above (2.1) Loenertz' identification of the close links between mercantile and missionary networks on the Black Sea and in Central Asia. The scanty evidence suggests, moreover, that missionaries in India and China had a functional network of communication that employed existing mercantile networks of communication for the transmission of letters. The letter in which Jordanus Catalani makes the martyrdom known to his confrères in Tabriz, Maragha and Dehikerkan was sent from Coga (Ghoga), a port in the vicinity of Mumbai, and was clearly intended to circulate between Franciscan and Dominican friars in all three cities.⁶⁶ However, from the amplified version of events contained in a later letter, dated 22 May 1322, in which the *custos* of the Franciscan convent at Tabriz relates the story of the martyrdoms to his superior, the Vicar of the Order of Friars Minor 'in partibus orientis', it is evident that the sources of information available to the friars at Tabriz were not limited to Jordanus' epistle, and it is possible that they included the bearers of his letters from Coga, in one instance identified as Jacobinus, a Genoese merchant and in another Lanfranchinus, a Genoese youth, in addition, perhaps, to letters from Jordanus that no longer survive.⁶⁷ This same letter from Bartholomew of Tabriz was transcribed by a

⁶⁴ *SF*, I, 26, 474.

⁶⁵ *SF*, I, 33, 484-86.

⁶⁶ This much is clear from the salutation: 'Reverendis in Christo patribus Predicatoribus et Minoribus in Taurisio, de Gorgano, et Manesa commorantibus, fr. JORDANUS predicatorum Ordinis omnium minimus, seipsum et pro salute pedum oscula beatorum cum lacrimis': Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 19. 'Commorantibus' also implies very close co-operation between the orders.

⁶⁷ The *Chronicon XXIV generalium* identifies the bearer of the letter from Ghoga to Tabriz as 'quidam Christianus Latinus Ianuensis, nomine Iacobinus, mercator' and that of the letter from Tana to Tabriz as Lanfranquinus, 'quidam iuvenis Ianuensis': *AF*, III, 609, 607. According to the Custos of

Dominican friar, Francesco da Pisa, resident in Sultanieh, and forwarded to Friar Pietro, Vicar of the Franciscans at Tabriz, who subsequently forwarded it to his brothers in Italy.⁶⁸ The swift diffusion of this martyrdom account in mendicant and missionary circles is further attested by its early appearance in Franciscan chronicles such as the *Chronicon XXIV generalium*, that of the friar known as Elemoysina, and the fourteenth-century English Franciscan manuscript, London, BL Cotton Nero A. IX.⁶⁹ Further, it is clear that the essential information was soon available to the papal court at Avignon, via Paulinus de Venetiis' early fourteenth-century treatise on the current state of the church.⁷⁰ By 1326, moreover, the story was known to the Bishop of Zayton in Southern China, Andrea da Perugia, in which year he alludes to it in a letter sent to the *custos* of the Franciscan convent at Perugia.⁷¹

The surviving letters of Franciscans and Dominicans operating in the East indicate, then, an extensive communications network linking them to their confrères both East and West. However, the surviving letters also leave no doubt that the communications network was variable. Although Andrea da Perugia in his 1326 letter from Zayton indicates that he is aware both of the martyrdom of his fellow Franciscans in Tana and of the deaths of other Franciscans in 'Lower India, in an exceedingly hot country where many other brethren have died and been buried', he also makes it clear that a very long time has passed since he heard news of his brethren at the convent of Perugia and claims to be unaware of 'who has died and who still lives'.⁷² Similar lapses in communication between Giovanni da

Tabriz, Francesco da Pisa compiled his report of the martyrdoms from 'many' letters of Jordanus, which suggests that more letters may once existed than the surviving two: Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 22; *BBB*, II, 65.

⁶⁸ Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 28; *BBB*, II, 70-71.

⁶⁹ *BBB*, II, 69-71.

⁷⁰ The narrative appears in Paulinus' *Chronologia magna*, compiled according to Golubovich, in the 1320s. Paulinus' version testifies to the existence of other forms of communication concerning the martyrdoms than now survive: it contains a reference to the friars minor being separated from the secular Christians and the friars preachers at an island called 'Dyo' (unquestionably Diu off the coast of Gujarāt). This unique detail is corrupt or missing in all other versions of the account, including the surviving letters of Jordanus and his superiors: *BBB*, II, 88-89.

⁷¹ Details and extracts of the Chronicles of John of Winterthur and Friar Elemoysina are given in *BBB*, II, 103-113; 135-137; 143; 149. The letter of Andrew of Perugia is translated in Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, pp. 235-37. Andrew of Perugia may have heard the story via Odorico who was in Zayton at some point after 1323 and before 1330.

⁷² 'Fratribus spiritualibus et amicis meis precipuis non scribo, quia qui decesserint et supersint ignoro': *SF*, I, 371-77 (p. 377).

Montecorvino and his superiors appear to have been brought about, according to his own words, by rumours of his death.⁷³

I have shown above how some information concerning the progress of missions in India, and some relatively precise political information circulated between Franciscan and Dominican houses East and West in the early fourteenth century, and how some of this information quite rapidly became available in the ambit of the papal court at Avignon. However, this availability appears to have been no guarantee of the comprehension, assimilation, and use of such information. Bartolomeo da Pisa, compiling the *De Conformitate vitae B. P. Francisco ad vitam Domini nostri Jesu Christi* after 1385, incorporated mention of the Tana martyrdoms into his text, but confused the location of the events with the Tana of ‘Tartaria aquilonis’ (Azov).⁷⁴ The Parisian manuscript of Paulinus de Venetiis’ *Chronologia* moreover, although it incorporates well-sourced and geographically-specific information concerning the Indian missions, follows this with a map that, in its Indian nomenclature, does not relate at all to the texts that it accompanies.⁷⁵ Equally, although information from Jordanus’ *Mirabilia descripta*, including his division of India into *maior* (under the control of the Sultan of Delhi) and *minor* (the Southern Indian states), was used by John XXII’s curia in the drafting of papal bulls concerning the missionary bishopric of Columbum (Kollam), this appears to have been the limit of the diffusion of this division.⁷⁶ Giovanni da Marignolli, travelling as a papal legate to Khanbalik via India after 1338, uses *India inferior* to refer to subcontinental India and *India superior* to southern China.⁷⁷ Thus the influence of Jordanus’ detailed information does not appear to have been lasting.

⁷³ Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 228; *SF*, I, 351.

⁷⁴ *AF*, IV, 332-33 and n. 7.

⁷⁵ The manuscript (Paris, BN, f. lat. 4939) described with extracts by Golubovich, who calls the map a ‘magnifico Mappamundi in forma sferica’ and notes its references to *India superior Johannis presbiteri*, *India magna*, *India parva quae et Ethyopia* and, amongst other unidentifiable islands, an *Insula piperis*. No toponyms from the Indian section of the map relate to surviving travel accounts: *BBB*, II, 85.

⁷⁶ Jean Richard points to the curia’s failure to incorporate recent information into its ‘texte officiel de géographie ecclésiastique’, the *Provinciale Romanae Ecclesiae*: ‘Evêchés titulaires et missionnaires dans le *Provinciale Romanae Ecclesiae*’, *École française de Rome: Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire*, 60 (1949), 227-36 (repr. in Richard, *Les relations entre l’Orient et l’Occident au Moyen Age: études et documents* (London: Variorum, 1977)), p. 235.

⁷⁷ Richard attributes the Dominican division and nomenclature to both the mendicant missionary orders: ‘Les missionnaires latins dans l’Inde’, 231. However, as the above discussion has shown, there is evidence of a distinction between the terminologies employed by the two orders. For Jordanus’

The above overview of mendicant missionary involvement in travel, communication and information transfer between Southern Asia and the West suggests that the inconsistent level of prioritisation of missionary activity in this area was matched by infrequent assimilation of information provided by missionaries into important works of information used by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁷⁸ Furthermore, communication between missionary outposts and the mission stations of Central Asia appears not always to have been effective. Pleas for additional missionaries made through the missionary hierarchies do not always seem to have met with success, perhaps also due in part to an insufficiency of personnel. Information gleaned as a result of missionary activity appears often to have been diffused only in certain closed circles rather than generally. Finally, the information available to the papacy was by no means complete nor up-to-date. Geographical and circumstantial detail, when provided, was, moreover, vulnerable to loss and change. Thus a specific detail concerning the Island of Diu (off the coast of Gujarāt) survives in only two manuscripts of Paulinus de Venetiis' *Chronologia*, appears in a corrupted form in the account of the *Chronicon XXIV generalium*, but disappears altogether in most versions.⁷⁹ The fate of a detailed and specific work such as that of Jordanus, which, to judge from its single surviving manuscript, appears to have been minimally diffused, indicates that the provision by missionaries of detailed and potentially useful information was no guarantee of its transmission into the canonical administrative tools of the church, or of its continued use.⁸⁰

division of India, see Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, pp. 114-15. For the use of this division in the papal bulls, see Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, pp. 32, 39. Giovanni da Marignolli explains that Manzi (Southern China) 'used to be called Greater India' ('olim maxima India vocabatur' and identifies 'Minubar' (Malabar) as 'inferior India': *SF*, I, 536-37.

⁷⁸James Muldoon notes that throughout the fourteenth century, the Avignon popes continue to rely on thirteenth-century models in the production of documents relating to the eastern missions, rather than upon available sources of newer information: Muldoon, 'The Avignon Papacy', p. 192.

⁷⁹*Chronicon*, *AF*, III, 474.

⁸⁰The *Mirabilia descripta* survives in a single copy that has been linked, on the grounds of its presentation, to Avignon. It should be noted here, however, that the sole surviving manuscript of Jordanus' *Mirabilia descripta* contains the traces of at least one assiduous reading of details supporting the possibilities of political and missionary intervention in India: BL, Add. 19513, fol. 6r, where an annotator highlights Jordanus' statement that the Indian peoples have prophecies that they will be subjugated by Christians, and a neat cursive minuscule copies into the margin Jordanus' statement that one may preach safely in India amongst the idolaters: Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, pp. 114-15. For a fuller treatment of this manuscript, which also contains a Latin copy of Marco Polo's *Book*, see 3.2.2.1 and 4.3.1.2.

2.3 Mercantile travel in India and Marco Polo's *Book*

The economic links between East and West in the late Middle Ages and the economic activities of Italian merchants in Asia in this period have been the subject of relatively regular and detailed discussion over the past half century or so, and thus need only be outlined briefly here.⁸¹ The Italian merchants from whom Pegolotti (2.1) obtained his information concerning the road to Cathay in the 1330s belonged to a period in which northern Italy benefitted from highly favourable economic conditions, and in which Venetian and Genoese vessels dominated the Mediterranean and Adriatic, and Genoese the Black Sea.⁸² R. S. Lopez has researched and written extensively on evidence that shows such merchants to have taken advantage of the relatively stable routes outlined at the start of this chapter in order to engage in direct trade in India and in Cathay.⁸³ Through scrutiny of commercial documents held in Genoese archives, Lopez's research identified three journeys to India made by Italian merchants within the century after Marco Polo's travels. Benedetto Vivaldi travelled from Genoa to 'partibus Indie' in 1315;⁸⁴ the Loredano brothers of Venice travelled overland to Delhi in 1338;⁸⁵ and at the very end of the period of relatively safe travel, Tommasino Gentile (1343) took the sea route from Hormuz to China, which would have necessitated changing ships on the west coast of India.⁸⁶ As Lopez has pointed out, the survival of records relating to such journeys is exceptional: we know about these journeys and the destinations of the travellers only because in each case something went wrong. Benedetto Vivaldi died at an unspecified location in India; Tommasino Gentile became ill; one of the Loredano brothers died before reaching India. Each of these incidents required legal

⁸¹ General overviews appear in Phillips, *Medieval Expansion*, pp. 96-114 and Lerner, *Marco Polo*, pp. 116-32. See also Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization*; R.S. Lopez, 'European Merchants', and Michel Balard, 'Les Génois en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient au XIV^e siècle: un cas exceptionnel?', in *Économies et sociétés au Moyen Âge: Mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy*, [n. ed.], (Paris: Sorbonne, 1973), pp. 681-89.

⁸² For a summary of trade routes and major ports of exchange for East-West trade c. 1300-1400 see Josef Engel, *Grosser historischer Weltatlas II: Mittelalter* (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch, 1970), p. 89.

⁸³ I treat here only the main relevant points. For full details, see Lopez, 'European Merchants'; 'L'extrême frontière du commerce de l'Europe médiévale', *Le Moyen Age*, 69 (4th Ser., 18), volume jubilaire 1888-1963, 479-90; 'Venezia e le grandi linee dell'espansione commerciale nel secolo XIII' in *La civiltà veneziana del secolo di Marco Polo* ([Milan]: Sansoni, [1955]), pp. 39-82; 'Nuove luci'.

⁸⁴ Lopez, 'European Merchants', p. 171, note 23.

⁸⁵ Lopez, 'European Merchants', p. 172; document in 'Nuove luci' at pp. 393-98.

⁸⁶ Lopez, 'Nuove luci', p. 370; document at pp. 392-93.

attention at home, and, in consequence, some details of each trip were recorded. Lopez has also pointed out that in the case of the journey of Benedetto Vivaldi, his stated destination according to the documents drawn up on his departure was the Byzantine Empire. Only on the occurrence of his death overseas did his true destination – India – become clear.⁸⁷ This combination of secrecy with regard to destination and lack of recorded information concerning successful trips leads to the result that it is not possible to draw from Lopez's research any firm conclusions concerning the frequency of direct trade with India on the part of Italian merchants, and thus as to the context of mercantile travel within which Marco Polo and the missionaries were travelling.

Lopez's ground-breaking research on this subject has, however, provided clues that enable scholars to reconstruct something of the wider context of mercantile travel and communication between Europe, India and China. The fact that Benedetto Vivaldi's business partner in India was able to make arrangements with regard to the former's estate without leaving India himself indicates both that he had some form of long-term, stable business concern on the subcontinent, and that a communications network was in place allowing him to write home, just as it did the missionaries discussed in the last section.⁸⁸ Similarly, the fact that up-to-date knowledge of the power and wealth of the Delhi sultanate and, in particular, about the generosity towards foreigners of its sultan Muhammad Ibn Tughluk (sultan between 1325 and 1351) appears to have reached the Loredano brothers and their associates in Venice, indicates prior contact of some kind. As a result of knowledge somehow acquired about the sultan, the brothers felt sufficiently confident enough in their prospects of profit to invest in a company and set out overland for the city.⁸⁹ Information concerning goods to be found in India also found its way back to Italy: Pegolotti's assertion that the best ginger to be found is that of 'Colonbo' and his information on how to distinguish it from other kinds of ginger indicates the arrival in Florence by the 1330s of some word of mouth information about Jordanus' see,

⁸⁷ Lopez, 'European Merchants', p. 171.

⁸⁸ Lopez writes that Stancone made arrangements with Vivaldi's heirs 'without leaving India': 'European Merchants', p. 171.

⁸⁹ R. S. Lopez, 'L'extrême frontiere', p. 481. By 1375, information about the Delhi sultanate also appears on the Catalan Atlas, given to Charles V of France by 1380: *Der katalanische Weltatlas vom Jahre 1375*, ed. and trans. by Hans-Christian Freiesleben (Stuttgart: Brockhaus Komm, 1977), p. 7.

Columbum (Quilon).⁹⁰ Although Pegolotti misconceives Columbum as an island off the south coast of India, the specific reference is nevertheless striking, particularly when compared with general ignorance concerning the specific areas of provenance of other Asian goods mentioned in the Pegolotti's text. Such sparse indications of Italian merchants' knowledge of India are dwarfed, however, by the many indications of contact, whose precise routes cannot be traced, on fifteenth-century Italian maps (6.3).

Although the above evidence indicates some direct and indirect communications with India on the part of Italian merchants in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is important to put such activity in context. Whilst Pegolotti, writing in the 1330s, states that the road to Cathay is most secure by day and by night, he says nothing whatsoever concerning the road to Delhi, or the sea route to the west coast of India. The indications of mercantile contact with India are thus fewer than they are for China in this period, no doubt in part due to the reputation of the sea voyage for length and danger.⁹¹ Furthermore, with regard to the journey of the Loredano brothers and their company to Delhi, Lopez, as a result of his economic analysis of the journey, points out that 'the profits of such a long and difficult journey, liberally rewarded by the generosity of the sultan, were high, but not as high as one might expect'.⁹² In fact, Lopez works out that the simple interest on the enterprise of one of its investors equated to only 15% per year. Whilst a good rate compared to the 8% current in Venice at the time, Lopez queries its attractiveness when the disproportionately greater risk of the enterprise is taken into consideration.⁹³ Once the benefits of direct trade with India in the period are weighed against the risk, and the fact that Pegolotti gives no instructions as to how a merchant should reach Southern Asia or its islands is taken into consideration, an alternative hypothesis suggests itself in which these areas appear as a niche destination for the exceptionally intrepid few. Those European merchants who did

⁹⁰ Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura*, pp. 360-61.

⁹¹ Giovanni da Montecorvino estimates the time taken by the sea route to China, via India, at two years and calls it 'most perilous': Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 226.

⁹² 'I guadagni di un viaggio così lungo, così arduo e così lautamente remunerato dalla generosità del Sultano furono alti, ma non tanto alti quanto ci si potrebbe aspettare': Lopez, 'Venezia e le grandi linee', pp. 59-60.

⁹³ Lopez, 'Venezia e le grandi linee', pp. 60-61.

frequent these routes must, moreover, have learned the necessary information to carry out their business primarily by word of mouth and by family connections.

2.3.1 Marco Polo's travels⁹⁴

Like many other Venetian and Genoese merchants, Niccolò and Maffeo Polo had an established trading base in Soldaia on the Black Sea.⁹⁵ Like other merchants and missionaries before and after them, the primary destination of the brothers' first journey of 1260 was the court of the Great Khan at Khanbalik, and it was to Cathay and Khanbalik that they returned with Niccolò's son Marco in 1271. As Marco's claims for his own and his family's service at the court of the Great Khan have been, as is well known, thrown into doubt by the lack of corroborative evidence in Mongol sources, the dates and precise reasons for Marco's visits to the islands of Indonesia, the Indian Ocean and India itself are not entirely clear.⁹⁶ According to Marco's *Book*, he took the sea route from Manzi to Persia, via India, as a final diplomatic service for the Great Khan, to accompany a Mongol Princess, Cocachin, to her promised husband, the Il-Khan Arghun of Persia (Lord of the 'Tartars of the Levant', according to Marco). The Polos arrived back in Venice in 1295, and the *Book* was composed, famously, during Marco's captivity in Genoa three years later.

The homeward itinerary that appears in the *Book* is, however, as Leonardo Olschki has pointed out, unlikely to have been that of a single journey, but was instead probably a composite itinerary, compiled from a number of journeys taken over a period of time. It includes, moreover, hearsay reports of several places, such as Japan and Java, that Marco probably did not visit, as well as certain mythical locations such as the islands of men and of women.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Narrative biographical information on Marco, Niccolò and Maffeo Polo is available in many sources. For a readable summary, see John Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book*. For recent bibliography, see Lerner, *Marco Polo*.

⁹⁵ Lerner, *Marco Polo*, pp. 32-33.

⁹⁶ There are problems with much of Marco's account of his family's diplomatic activities for the Great Khan. However, tablets of gold issued by Qubilaï to Maffeo and Niccolò as passes survived to be inventoried on their death, verifying the existence of some connection. A summary of the arguments, which are only tangentially relevant to this thesis, can be found in Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?*

⁹⁷ See Leonardo Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia*, trans. by John A. Scott (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 32. This method of construction explains Marco's deeply confusing inclusion of a discussion of Çipangu (Japan) in his westward itinerary in the section of the *Book* termed the 'Livre de Indie' (4.3).

Leaving aside questions of Marco's actual homeward itinerary, the westward itinerary via India presented in the *Book* is as follows. Setting out through Mangi (the Manzi of Odorico and Giovanni da Montecorvino) to Zayton,⁹⁸ he travels by sea, stopping at Cianba (Champa), concerning which he notes the King's polygamy and many children and recounts the story of Qubilai's attack on the place, before providing only a very general description of Java.⁹⁹ The itinerary proceeds via two islands called Sondur and Condur (Indonesian islands of uncertain identity) and the province of Locac (probably located in the east of modern Thailand or peninsular Malaysia),¹⁰⁰ southwards to an island called Pentain and its city of Malaiur (Bintan island or Singapore), all of which places are described briefly, with much attention to each place's economic productivity.¹⁰¹ Marco's itinerary next reaches 'Java the Less' ('Java la menor': Sumatra) where, according to the *Book*, he spent five months on the north-eastern coast, and from which the North Star cannot be seen.¹⁰² He attributes eight kingdoms to this island, of which he describes four in moderate detail, including the wild people and unicorns (rhinoceri) of Basma, trees that produce wine in Samatra, people who indulge in anthropophagic euthanasia in Dragoiam and the wild tailed men who are supposed to inhabit the interior of Lambri. From Sumatra, the itinerary moves northwards to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, described only very briefly but with dog-headed anthropophages attributed to the Andamans.¹⁰³ Marco's itinerary then proceeds, in the estimate of its author, 1000 miles a little south of west to Seilan (Sri Lanka), described in detail and

⁹⁸ Work on the identification of places mentioned on Marco's itinerary is summarised in Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia*, p. 28. Approximate (or sometimes conjectural) locations of all major places mentioned on Marco's westward itinerary and in this section, based on the works of identification referenced in this section and, in particular, Yule-Cordier, appear on Maps 2 and 3.

⁹⁹ *Divisament*, 162-63, pp. 538-40. Olschki doubts that Marco stopped at Java: *Marco Polo's Asia*, p. 30. See Appendix 2, Map 3 for South East Asian toponyms and locations.

¹⁰⁰ *Divisament*, 164, pp. 540-41. Yule identifies Locac with Thailand: Yule-Cordier, II, 278.

¹⁰¹ *Divisament*, 165, pp. 541-42. Yule identifies this as a place called, in his time, Bintang or Bentān, 'a considerable island at the eastern extremity of the Straits of Malacca': Yule-Cordier, II, 280. Another potential candidate for Bintan is Singapore, which has been suggested as an identification for Paten or Pantem, an island referred to by Odorico da Pordenone and equally lacking a secure identification: *SF*, I, 14, 447. Malavir's identity is equally conjectural, thought possibly to be Singapore or another location in the vicinity by Yule-Cordier (II, 281), but thought by Pelliot to refer, due to an error in Marco's itinerary, to a kingdom of south-east Sumatra: *Notes on Marco Polo*, II, 773.

¹⁰² *Divisament*, 166-70, pp. 542-48. Pelliot discusses in detail the regions Marco names, which include regions in the north west and south west of the island: *Notes on Marco Polo*, I, 86-88 (Basman), II, 661-70 (Fansur); II, 613-13 (Dragoiam, which he is unable to identify, affirming only that it must be a kingdom of the Battaks).

identified as the biggest island in the world.¹⁰⁴ Amongst the many economic and ethnographic details Marco provides for this island are its variety of precious stones and in particular the magnificent ruby belonging to its king. From Sri Lanka, a voyage sixty miles westwards takes Marco to Maabar (the Coromandel Coast), identified as belonging to Greater India. The *Book* at this point provides a detailed description of Maabar that covers pearl fishing, an account of the king of the chief province, ‘Senderbandi Devar’, the eldest of five brothers, that attributes to him five hundred wives and a love of precious stones.¹⁰⁵ The description also takes in *satī*, self-sacrifice before idols, and the popularity in the region of augury and divination amongst many other ethnographic details. The *Book* next provides a shorter treatment of Mutfili (Motupalli, Tilanga), reached by travelling 1000 miles north of Maabar. This short description takes in the kingdom’s wise queen, described in admiring terms, and includes a legendary account of the use of eagles to gather diamonds from snake-infested mountains.¹⁰⁶ Following a discussion of the tomb of St. Thomas, which Marco does not locate, the description moves on to ‘a province called Lar’ (south of Gujarāt).¹⁰⁷ Marco identifies this region as the place of origin of the ‘abraiamain’ (Brahmans) of all India, which acts as a prompt to a long discussion of their practices and beliefs. After Lar, the itinerary as Marco’s *Book* records it is abruptly disrupted in order to give more information concerning Sri Lanka that the author or his amanuensis ‘forgot’ to give earlier, including a detailed account of the life of the Buddha, an account of Adam’s Peak, and of the Buddhist relics of Sri Lanka,¹⁰⁸ before moving suddenly south to Cail (Kayal, a now ruined city to the far

¹⁰³ *Divisament*, 171-72, pp. 549.

¹⁰⁴ *Divisament*, 171-73, pp. 549-51. See Appendix 2, Map 2 for places mentioned in India.

¹⁰⁵ *Divisament*, 174, pp. 552-61. The name probably represents Sundara Pandya Dewar, a name commonly used by Pandya kings at the time. Rubiés suggests that the five kings of the region are to be identified with a certain ‘Kulasekhara [ruling c. 1268-1310] and his brothers’: Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰⁶ *Divisament*, 175, pp. 561-64. Parallels for the method of harvesting diamonds from mountains can be found in the stories of Sindbad the Sailor, in Niccolò Conti and in various forms in other Arab sources, as well as in the thirteenth-century account of the Prester John legend of the so-called Elysaeus: *Der Priester Johannes*, II, pp. 120-27 (p. 125). Rubiés identifies the queen as the Kakatiya ruler Rudramma Devi of Warangal (c. 1261-c.94): *Travel and Ethnology*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Divisament*, 177, pp. 567-72. Rubiés identifies Lar as ‘a Hoysala centre, perhaps Belour’, centrally located in the peninsula: *Travel and Ethnology*, p. 59 (n.). I follow Nainar, however, who identifies it as a region to the south of Gujarāt on the west coast, noting that Ibn Sa’id refers to Tana as ‘the last city of Lār’: Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, p. 81 (n. 181).

¹⁰⁸ *Divisament*, 178, pp. 572-77. The anomaly of the split information concerning Sri Lanka is amended by certain later redactors, including the Court French translation of the text and Francesco Pipino’s popular Latin version (3.2).

south of the peninsula), identified as a rich port city.¹⁰⁹ At this point, Marco's place descriptions once again become relatively brief notices, often principally concerned with information of a mercantile nature. From Cail, described as a busy port of exchange, well-ruled by the first of the five fighting brothers who are kings of Maabar, Marco proceeds to Coilun (Quilon), whose products include pepper and indigo and whose people are described as black and recognising no carnal sin.¹¹⁰ The itinerary then leaves Quilon and moves southwards to Comari (Cape Cormorin), where, according to Marco, it first becomes possible to see the Pole Star, of which he lost sight in Java the Less.¹¹¹ From Comari he moves north west to discuss the kingdom of Eli (Mount Delly), a strong, rich kingdom where pepper and ginger abound, before discussing Melibar (Malabar), and Gofurat (Gujarāt), both of which are described by Marco as plagued by pirates.¹¹² Following discussion of Gujarāt, the itinerary moves southward — though Marco identifies it as westward — to discuss the kingdom of Tana, not at this stage under the rulership of the Delhi sultanate.¹¹³ Marco then identifies Canbaet (Kanbhāya), a great port of exchange, as lying further west of Tana, before identifying Semenat (Somnath) and Kesmacoran (Makran, a coastal region of modern Pakistan and Iran) as major ports of call on the traveller's journey westwards, and the latter as 'the last province of India, travelling between the east and the north'.¹¹⁴

It is clear from the above outline of the relevant sections of his *Book* that Marco's acquaintance with the Indian subcontinent and the islands of the Indian Ocean is far greater than a single journey could have allowed. In addition, problems with the order of the itinerary and the relative situation of places in the account, such as, for example, the problem of the incorrect relative locations of Malabar and Gujarāt, also indicate an attempt to reconcile and construct a linear narrative from multiple journeys via different routes to various destinations.

¹⁰⁹ *Divisament*, 179, pp. 577-78. Guéret-Laferté identifies Kayal in her edition of Poggio's, *De l'Inde*, p. 91, n. 35.

¹¹⁰ *Divisament*, 180, pp. 578-80.

¹¹¹ *Divisament*, 181, p. 580.

¹¹² Melibar and Gofurat are inaccurately described as neighbouring provinces by Marco: *Divisament*, 182-84, pp. 581-84. Eli is Hīlī according to Arab writers: Nainar, *Arab Geographers*, pp. 39-40.

¹¹³ *Divisament*, 185, pp. 586-7.

¹¹⁴ *Divisament*, 187-88, pp. 588-89.

2.4 The decline of mercantile and missionary travel

The decline of mercantile and missionary endeavours in India and the Far East in the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries is generally attributed to a combination of unfavourable developments as diverse as changing political conditions, strife between European trading rivals and the ravages of the black death.¹¹⁵ Politically, the period of relative stability that permitted the travels of Marco, Niccolò and Maffè Polo, those of Lopez's merchants, and those of the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries began to draw to a close in the mid-fourteenth century.¹¹⁶ The probable decline and disappearance of Jordanus Catalani's bishopric in the mid-fourteenth century coincided with a period of political upheaval and consequent worsening conditions for travel in Persia, Central Asia and the Far East, as well as with an increase in the difficulty of missionary activity in China and in Central Asia. The increasing dangers caused by these worsening conditions became clear with the ordering of a pogrom against Latin missionaries and merchants in Almalik by the newly-established Muslim Khans of Turkestan in 1339, as a result of which several Minorite friars suffered a martyrdom that was widely-reported in Franciscan circles.¹¹⁷ Although the region stabilised to a degree within the following few years, the event nevertheless led to a level of lasting hostility in this key waystation of the Silk Road.¹¹⁸ At the same time, the former Il-Khan empire, now fragmented, became significantly less safe for western merchants. Tabriz, an important waystation for travellers to India via the sea route (from Hormuz), was embargoed by Italian merchants in the late 1330s and 1340s due to an episode in which the goods of the city's Genoese merchants were confiscated.¹¹⁹ Scattered problems of this kind, in addition to a general growing instability in the now fragmenting former Mongol khanates, had the effect of rendering steadily more unsafe both the land and sea routes to India. Still later, however, the gradual loss of control over Cathay of the

¹¹⁵ Edwin S. Hunt and James M. Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 180; Lopez, 'European Merchants', 181-84; *La Papauté*, pp. 229-78.

¹¹⁶ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade*, p. 120.

¹¹⁷ Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 162. However, as E. Randolph Daniel notes, the possibility of suffering martyrdom would have been an attraction rather than a deterrent for some Franciscans particularly anxious to follow the example of their founder in the *imitatio Christi: The Franciscan Concept of Mission*, pp. 116-17.

¹¹⁸ Lopez, 'Nuove luci', p. 360.

¹¹⁹ Lopez, 'Nuove luci', p. 370

Mongol Great Khan, and finally the fall of Khanbalik to the Chinese Ming dynasty in 1368 led to a ban on foreigners in that city.¹²⁰ Friars as well as the merchants suffered from this change of climate, probably in part because, accorded stipends and privileges under the Mongols, they were viewed by the new order as closely associated with the regime of the old.¹²¹ Because, as we have seen, travel to India and the islands of the Indian Ocean was intimately connected with travel to Manzi and Cathay, such unfavourable conditions in China impacted significantly upon missionary travel to the Southern Asia.

In the realm of missionary activity, the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries saw a change that James Muldoon attributes in large measure to the papacy's tendency, already noticeable in the early-fourteenth century, to rely on thirteenth-century models and information in its communication with non-Christian peoples, rather than responding to new information and changed international circumstances. Muldoon notes that the papacy's response to those outside the Church 'had become fixed long before the great expansion of Europeans overseas made relations between Christians and infidels a crucial issue in international relations', and that because papal modes of conceptualising non-Europeans and the policies based on these were 'not capable of dealing with the newly discovered lands', its international role 'declined rapidly'.¹²² As the international influence and power of the papacy declined, that of individual sovereign states rose.¹²³ The role of the papacy in relation to non-Christian lands and peoples became, in the early-fifteenth century, that of mediator in secular territorial disputes arising from expansionist policies of national rulers.¹²⁴ The aim, set out in *Cum hora undecima*, to convert non-Christian peoples by peaceable means under the direction of the pope gave way to a changed method, existing in practice rather than in policy, of permitting the invasion of non-Christian lands on the understanding that

¹²⁰ Lopez, 'Nuove luci', p. 359.

¹²¹ Giovanni da Marignolli reports — not without bias — that he finds the Franciscans in a privileged and well-paid position at the court of the Great Khan in Khanbalik in 1339: *SF*, I, 538-29.

¹²² Muldoon, 'The Avignon Papacy', p. 191.

¹²³ Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*, p. 105.

¹²⁴ For example, the Council of Constance concerned itself with resolving the dispute between the Teutonic Knights and the Kingdom of Poland; between 1431 and 1437 Eugenius IV arbitrated between the Kingdoms of Castile and Portugal over title to the Canary Islands.

Christianisation would follow conquest.¹²⁵ According to Richard, moreover, at the same time as this movement towards the endorsement of secular territorial expansion, the fifteenth-century papacy refocused its attention on the unification of peoples observing the various non-Roman Christian rites under that of the Church of Rome and the authority of the pope, a change which transferred both priority and resources from the conversion of the *gentes*. In the course of this drive to unification Franciscans and Dominicans once again acted as papal functionaries.¹²⁶ All these changes combined to lead to a gradual change in the role and focus of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, and as ‘the ecclesiastical provinces of Khanbalik, of Saraï, of Sultanieh and Matrega seem well and truly forgotten’, the friars began to lose their former unrivalled status as missionary pioneers in non-Christian lands.¹²⁷

In the 1380s, stability in Central Asia worsened further as a result of the campaigns of Tīmūr.¹²⁸ A slow weakening of the power of the Delhi sultanate, followed by Tīmūr’s army’s capture of the city in 1398 ensured that the Delhi would not be a destination for traders for the foreseeable future: the Chioggian merchant Niccolò de’ Conti, when (1439-1443) he gave Poggio Bracciolini, papal secretary and noted humanist, an account of his travels in India in the twenty-five years before 1439, failed to mention the city. Niccolò returned to Venice via the Red Sea and Egypt, where he was forced to renounce his faith and convert to Islam in order to save his own life.¹²⁹ On the Indian subcontinent and in the Indian Ocean, Niccolò visited many of the places that Marco and Odorico had visited over a century earlier,

¹²⁵ In the latter case, following a plea from King Duarte of Portugal, Eugenius IV issued the bull *Romanus pontifex*, in which he permitted Portugal to conquer those islands of the Canaries where the populations were not yet converted to Christianity, on the understanding that these would be swiftly converted to the faith. Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*, pp. 106, 120-31. There is some similarity with Alexander III’s legitimisation of Henry II’s conquest of Ireland, in which the Irish are characterised as lax Christians, justifying English intervention: Muldoon, ‘The Indian as Irishman’, *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 111 (1975), 267-89 (p. 272); reprinted in Muldoon, *Canon Law*.

¹²⁶ Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 256-278.

¹²⁷ ‘les provinces ecclésiastiques de Khanbaliq, de Saraï, de Sultanieh, de Matrega paraissent bien oubliées’: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 274. The last mission to China was sent in 1370: Muldoon, ‘The Avignon Papacy’, 195.

¹²⁸ For an overview of Tīmūr’s campaigns, see Hilda Hookham, *Tamburlaine the Conqueror* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962); for campaigns in Delhi and Northern India, see pp. 187-201.

¹²⁹ Poggio, *De l’Inde*, p. 79. For biographical information on Niccolò, the manuscripts of Book IV of the *De varietate fortunae*, the text and its sources, see the introduction to Poggio Bracciolini, *De L’Inde*, pp. 7-71; for the *De varietate fortunae* as a whole, see Poggio Bracciolini, *De varietate fortunae*, ed. by Outi Merisalo, *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, Ser. B. 265 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemie, 1993), pp. 9-81.

enabling him to testify to significant power-shifts, such as the fall from power of the Delhi sultanate and the emergence of the large and growing Hindu power of Vijayanagara in the midst of the peninsula.¹³⁰

Evidence of contacts between India and the West in the fifteenth century following the fall of Tīmūr is, briefly leaving aside Niccolò de' Conti, sparse, and that which exists does not often testify to the arrival of new information on the East in Europe.¹³¹ There are, however, as Lynn White Jr. has noted, sufficient passing notices of Latins both trading and living in the East to cast doubt on the notion that the end of the so-called *pax mongolica* resulted in an almost complete cessation of mercantile and missionary travel. White notes the cases of a Dominican friar, Peter Castellani, returning to Grasse from preaching activities 'in loco vocato *Cin*' (1449), a Sieneese merchant, dying in 1455, said to have travelled in his youth in India and, strangest of all, a native of Messina called Pietro Rambulo who, after thirty-five years in Ethiopia, travelled to the courts of Alfonso V at Naples and of Nicholas V in Rome, leaving behind an account of his travels, which included a report of his participation in an embassy to India and Sri Lanka.¹³² An attribution on Behaim's globe of information to an otherwise unknown 'Bartolommeo Fiorentino', said to have returned 'dalle Indie' in 1424 after 25 years in the East, though problematic because evidently confused, may be a trace of another unknown traveller.¹³³ In 1472 a certain 'Ioannes Griffencoloro' was granted a letter of passage to allow him to pursue business in different parts of the world including India ('etiam Indiae'), but the information recorded concerning the destination, as in most of these references,

¹³⁰ Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 54; Vijayanagara begins to emerge in the late fourteenth century: Rubiés, p. 14.

¹³¹ The Bavarian soldier Johannes Schiltberger, captured by Tīmūr in 1396, wrote a semi-fictional account of his travels as a slave following his return to Germany (between 1427 and 1443). Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 113-17. Leaving to one side the Portuguese voyages, the last surviving eyewitness account of the century to reach Italy was the Genoese Hieronimo da Santo Stefano, whose surviving letter from Tripoli to Italy is dated 1497: translated in Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, Hakluyt Society, 1st Ser., 22 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1857) (item 4), pp. 3-10.

¹³² Lynn White Jr, 'Indic Elements in Petrarch's *Trionfo della Morte*', *Speculum*, 49 (1974), 217-19, including references. The account of Rambulo's embassy is as yet unpublished.

¹³³ Behaim reports Bartolomeo as visiting Eugenius at Venice on his return in 1424, when Eugenius was not yet pope. Behaim may have confused a Florentine Bartolomeo with the Chioggian Niccolò de' Conti in one or more respects, but this is more likely to have happened if a Florentine called Bartolomeo did in fact spend some time in the east: E. G. Ravenstein, *Martin Behaim: His Life and His Globe* (London: Philip, 1908), pp. 69, 89.

is only of the vaguest kind that, given the shifting definitions of India discussed in Chapter 1, cannot be securely identified.¹³⁴

The same problems of specificity and identification attend the references to East-West travel for which any documentation survives. Although Richard recounts the arrival of several ambassadors and pilgrims coming, reputedly from India, to Rome in the early-fifteenth century, the information about these provided by the documentary sources is minimal. Two priests, Abraham and Saliba, arrived as pilgrims in Rome in 1403, though no detail is given about their place of origin.¹³⁵ The following year, several Catholic monks from 'India' are recorded as making the pilgrimage to Rome and to Santiago, and a little later Boniface IX offered indulgences to pilgrims identified as King and Queen of the Indians.¹³⁶ Sporadic references of this kind recur throughout the century. Records for 1477-78, for example, indicate a party of people journeying from 'India of St. Thomas' ('Indiam S. Thomae') to Rome seeking indulgences.¹³⁷ Yet again, no precise information concerning their homeland is given. All these records, then, suffer from the problem of lack of specificity, rendering difficult the secure identification of their subjects with Christians on the Indian subcontinent. Equally, the contacts that they imply appear to have added little to general or ecclesiastical knowledge of India and the East, serving only to confirm the long-standing Latin myth of Prester John, that India was a land densely populated by Christians, and even ruled over by a Christian king.

It is undoubtedly true that a decline in direct trade and missionary links with Southern Asia in the late-fourteenth century impacted upon the quality and type of information about the region available to the Latin West. It can no longer be maintained, however, that West-East travel virtually halted in this period. Rather, travel continued to an as yet unknowable extent, with information relating to and necessary to travel circulating perhaps by word of mouth. It is also reasonable, I believe, to suggest that a certain insularity appears to have crept into the ecclesiastical establishment with respect to the East at this time: of the mission in

¹³⁴ *Supplementum ad Bullarium franciscanum, continens litteras romanorum pontificum annorum 1378-1484*, II: 1471-1474, ed. by Cesare Cenci (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 2003), 758, no.1657 (n. 72).

¹³⁵ Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 259.

¹³⁶ Richard, *La Papauté*, pp. 259-60.

¹³⁷ *Supplementum ad Bullarium franciscanum*, II, 827, no. 1854; 860, no. 1951.

Cin from which Peter Castellani returned in 1449 left no trace has been found other than a single notarial document.¹³⁸ However, irrespective of the heightened difficulties of direct mercantile contact with the East and of the apparent decline in papal interest in the eastern *gentes*, as the following chapter will show, the late-thirteenth-century and early-fourteenth-century first-hand travel accounts of Marco Polo and Odorico da Pordenone nevertheless maintained and even increased their popularity during this period.

¹³⁸ White Jr., 'Indic Elements', p. 217, n. 85.

Part II

Reception: The Evidence of the Physical Texts

Chapter 3: Manuscript Evidence for Patterns in the Diffusion and Readership of Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio*

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the present chapter is to provide a broad context for the detailed analysis and discussion (chapters 4 and 5) of the manuscript evidence for the reception of specific aspects of the two widely-diffused travel accounts Marco Polo's *Book* and Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio*. My primary concern here is, then, to offer an overview of the types of manuscript in which the texts are preserved in their various versions, of annotation patterns across manuscripts, and of trends in ownership, where known. My method in the production of this overview has been to employ the information supplied in library catalogues, handlists and other available sources to summarise diffusion and reception trends for the texts in England, France and Italy. Personal examination of selected manuscripts has enabled me to provide more detail on certain aspects of these trends based on a smaller sample of manuscripts. A summary of the key information for each manuscript on which this chapter is based is set out in tables 1 and 2 (Appendix 3).¹ The numbers of the manuscripts personally examined appear in boldface in the bibliography of manuscripts.

It is important, however, to stress at this stage the limitations of the present approach in presenting a complete picture of diffusion. The effects of the passage of time will undoubtedly differ for different types of manuscripts, thus survival rates will differ, and surviving numbers are not necessarily a reliable guide to levels of readership. Frequently-read manuscripts, particularly those on paper, may well have been vulnerable to decay due to frequent use, rendering the less frequently-read but better-produced manuscripts more likely to survive, perhaps as family heirlooms.² Similarly, lower-status manuscripts could be vulnerable to decay due to their visual unattractive nature: once their content or format was superseded or fell out of fashion, there would be little incentive to keep an unadorned, scruffily-written

¹ Notes on the sources used to compile the tables and the terminology employed in them appear at the start of Appendix 3. The full call numbers for all manuscripts discussed are listed alongside their short codes in the bibliography.

² Bec, *Les livres des Florentins*, p. 16.

volume. Equally, there exists a natural bias towards the survival of very high-status manuscripts, which would, later, be valued for their antiquarian interest as well as for the quality of their decoration and illumination.

Where possible and appropriate, I have used inventory evidence for book ownership available in published scholarship to supplement the very incomplete picture of ownership and readership of both texts supplied by colophons and ownership marks. As has been noted by many scholars before now, however, inventories provide limited help with regard to ownership and readership patterns of such manuscripts. The variety of works circulating under titles such as the ‘Book of Wonders’, the ‘Marvels of the East’, ‘Wonders of the Great Khan’, ‘customs of the Tartars’ and the like often renders inventory evidence inconclusive or misleading.³ In addition, Christian Bec and Susan Cavanaugh both note in their surveys of ownership of Florentine and English books respectively that less precious or lower-status books would often not be distinguished in inventories and wills with individual entries.⁴ Finally, books containing a considerable number and variety of texts would by no means necessarily be inventoried at the level of the individual texts they contained. Rather, they would almost certainly in personal inventories and also on many occasions in institutional inventories, be listed under a generic title, or under the title of what was perceived to be the most important work in the volume. Rather than prohibiting the use of manuscript evidence, however, all the above caveats should serve primarily as a reminder that the surviving evidence we have is incomplete to an unknowable extent.

3.2 Marco Polo’s *Book*

Famously dictated to Rustichello da Pisa in a Genoese prison in 1298, the earliest version of Marco’s *Book* is generally agreed to have been composed in Franco-Italian, in a textual version that no longer survives. It is from this text that the large

³ Dutschke notes a ‘Libellus de mirabilibus Magni Canis’ in an inventory of the Neapolitan library of Robert of Anjou (1278-1343): Dutschke, ‘Francesco Pipino’, pp. 1146-48.

⁴ Bec, *Les livres des Florentins*, p. 14; Susan Hagen Cavanaugh, ‘A Study of Books Privately Owned in England 1300-1450’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 11-17.

majority of manuscripts (known as family ‘A’ in the stemma) of the work survive.⁵ The text met with limited success in Franco-Italian, however: only one complete manuscript and one fragment of the text in this language survive, by comparison with a multitude of exemplars of its many other versions. Of all versions, the Latin translation of the Dominican Friar Francesco Pipino, produced in Bologna or Padua between 1314 and 1324 and known as the *Liber de consuetudinibus et conditionibus orientalium regionum*, is the most widely diffused, accounting for around two fifths of its surviving manuscripts and fragments.⁶ Pipino’s translation’s dominance, then, lends the Latin manuscript traditions a degree of uniformity not present in any of the vernacular textual traditions.⁷ The following section presents the diffusion trends of the different versions of the *Book* in Italy, France and England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and reviews the implication of these trends in diffusion for the *Book*’s readership.

Table A: Surviving manuscripts of Marco’s *Book* from England, France and Italy: summary

	Total	Fourteenth-century manuscripts			Fifteenth-century manuscripts		
		Fr.-Italian	volgare	Latin	Fr.-Italian	volgare	Latin
Italy	45 (49)	1	7	7	0	16 (3)	14 (1)
		French		Latin	French		Latin
France	22 (24)	4 (2)		4	8		6
		French		Latin	French		Latin
England	14 (16)	0 (2)		9	1		4

Fragments, not included in the numbers in boldface, are given in parentheses.⁸

⁵ Out of a total known number of 138 surviving manuscripts and fragments of the *Book*, 11 have been identified as deriving from a different textual tradition, which contains a number of passages not in ‘A’. Based on the most recent and full census carried out by C.W. Dutschke: ‘Francesco Pipino’, pp. 276-282. The fullest redaction of the text belonging to this family is the Latin version found in Toledo 49.20 (siglum Z): see Marco Polo, *Milione: redazione latina del manoscritto Z*, ed. by Alvaro Barbieri (Milan: Fondazione Pietro Bembo, 1998). ‘Z’ is abridged in places, yet nevertheless contains a number of long passages not contained in manuscripts of the ‘A’ family. The various versions of the ‘B’ family are discussed in Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, *Il Milione: Prima edizione integrale* (Florence: Comitato Geografico Nazionale Italiano, 1928), pp. CLVIII-CC. For the purposes of this reception-centred thesis, however, it is sufficient here to note only that diffusion of the ‘B’ family of texts appears, to judge by the surviving manuscript numbers, to have been very limited in the medieval period. Where sigla are included in parentheses, these are those employed by Benedetto and Dutschke. See the simplified *stemma* diagram for the *Book* in Appendix 1.

⁶ Dutschke, ‘Francesco Pipino’, p. 13.

⁷ I rely here on the dating of C. W. Dutschke, who reasons that the work must have been produced between the composition of the bulk of Pipino’s other major work, the *Chronicon* (in which the translation is referred to as completed) and the death of Marco Polo in 1324: ‘Francesco Pipino’, p. 219. At the time of writing, Christine Gadrat (Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes, Paris) is preparing a doctoral thesis on the Latin manuscripts of Marco’s *Book*.

⁸ I have not included analysis of fragmentary manuscripts in the Appendices due to the difficulty of extracting reception-related evidence from such pieces. Fragments are noticed in tables A and B only for the sake of completeness.

3.2.1 The Italian States

There is direct evidence for the circulation of Marco's *Book* in a variety of versions on the Italian peninsula in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As mentioned above, the early Franco-Italian met with only limited success. However, this version was swiftly joined by a variety of translations. In the early years of the fourteenth century the *Book* was translated into Tuscan, Latin, and Venetian, then back again from Venetian into Tuscan, and, by the Dominican Friar Francesco Pipino, from Venetian into its ultimately most successful incarnation, the Latin *Liber de conditionibus et consuetudinibus orientalium regionum* (see the *Stemma* at fig. 1, Appendix 1). Each translation involved, of course, editorial decisions resulting in changes of tone and emphasis and relating to changes in the projected function and audience of the work. Such textual and content-related changes will not, however, be analysed in this chapter, which is principally concerned with what known ownership information, numbers, and physical evidence of the surviving manuscripts, indicate concerning their readership and reception. Explanations of the importance of physical features discussed and of any technical or specialist vocabulary employed here appear in the 'notes to tables', Appendix 3.

3.2.1.1 The fourteenth century

Vernacular manuscripts

Of the eight surviving fourteenth-century Italian vernacular manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book*, seven are executed in lower-status scripts such as *mercantesca* and an equal number have only medium, low or non-existent levels of decoration. Almost all employ paper, the more economical and less durable alternative to parchment. The language of these versions is Tuscan, suggesting circulation of the *Book* probably in mercantile, financial and administrative circles, in the vernacular-literate economy of fourteenth-century Tuscany.⁹ There is, by contrast, a notable lack of surviving Venetian manuscripts of the work from the fourteenth century.¹⁰ The existence of Tuscan translations from Venetian versions (Ashburnham 534 and

⁹ The colophon of BNC, II.ii.61, written by the *podestà* of Cerreto Guidi confirms this in one instance.

¹⁰ In fact, the only complete surviving manuscript of the main Venetian translation of the *Book* (VA) of the book is the mid – fifteenth-century manuscript Padua, Biblioteca Civica, CM 211. The text has been edited in *Il Milione veneto, MS CM211 della Biblioteca civica di Padova*, ed. by A. Barbieri and A. Andreose (Venice: Marsilio, 1999).

Florence, BNC, Pal. 590) indicate that that the work did in fact circulate in the Veneto during this period.

The almost complete absence of surviving high-status manuscript copies of the vernacular *Book* from fourteenth-century Italy is, given the work's opening address in its Franco-Italian and earliest Tuscan and Venetian versions — which appeals first to 'Lords, emperors and kings, dukes and marquesses' before addressing 'counts, knights and citizens' — is a striking indicator of the vernacular *Book*'s actual rather than projected socio-economic readership.¹¹ The sole surviving vernacular manuscript from the fourteenth century that can be traced to a courtly environment is Paris, BN, f. ital. 434, owned in the fifteenth century by a member of the lower nobility in the Abruzzi.¹² This manuscript, executed in an even *mercantesca* with decorated initials and a foliate border on its opening page, is better-presented than most other vernacular manuscripts of the same period and area. Finally, the apparently limited extent of diffusion of this Franco-Italian redaction of the work may be indicative of a lack of success in attracting an intended courtly audience. The language in which Marco's amanuensis, Rustichello, chose to set down the work was, in the *signorie* of *duecento* and *trecento* Northern Italy, the language of courtly Arthurian and Carolingian-themed romances, works that circulated in well-illustrated manuscripts executed in gothic bookhands for noble patrons.¹³ If, however, the Franco-Italian redaction of the *Book* was stylistically calculated to appeal to the courtly audience that appreciated Franco-Italian chivalric tales of Arthur and Charlemagne, Rustichello's attempt to capitalise on this audience appears not to have been successful. The surviving Italian manuscript of this version is not the high-quality product characteristic of this courtly culture, but a mid-range

¹¹ 'Seignors enperaor et rois, dux et marquois, cuens, chevaliers et b[o]rgio[i]s': *Divisament*, 1, p. 305; *Il Milione veneto*, p. 113. Dutschke divides Italian vernacular manuscripts of the *Book* into 'noble Venetian' and 'merchant Tuscan' on the basis of what she distinguishes as the general lower production values of the Tuscan texts and the 'regularity of [the] script' of the Venetian manuscripts and the 'evenness of its spacing'. Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 42; p. 32. As I have suggested above, however, there is insufficient surviving evidence of Venetian manuscript diffusion to apply such a distinction in the fourteenth century. The copy that, according to an inventory of 1351, belonged to Doge Marin Falier, has not been identified with any of the surviving manuscripts, and is the sole copy known from inventory evidence to have belonged to a Venetian of high status in this period: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 1077.

¹² Owned in the mid-fifteenth century by a Pietro de Celano: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 425.

¹³ Petrucci, Armando, 'Reading and Writing *Volgare* in Medieval Italy' in Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, trans. by Charles M. Radding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 169-235 (p. 181).

production with a low level of decoration. In fact, the diffusion pattern of the *Book* suggests that it met with its relatively high level of success only on translation and reworking into other languages and stylistic conventions.

Latin manuscripts

Whilst the Latin manuscripts, mostly of Pipino's translation, from fourteenth-century Italy are fewer than the vernacular manuscripts, those that survive generally exhibit higher production values. Five of the seven manuscripts employ the more durable and expensive support of parchment in preference to paper, and at least three feature decoration of medium to high quality. Similarly, the script employed is more often the more time-consuming and higher-status rounded gothic, rather than the less formal, quickly-written *mercantesca* or *cancelleresca*. Where manuscripts of this group have colophons and ownership marks, these indicate a range of readerly milieux consonant with their higher level of workmanship and decoration: one such manuscript was in the library of the Este family from at least the fifteenth century; one derives from a monastic environment; a third belonged, by the mid-fifteenth century to a high-level administrator in the service of Este.¹⁴

Establishing ownership and readership milieux for the remainder of fourteenth-century Latin manuscripts from this region presents a number of problems, however. Given the Dominican Friar Francesco Pipino's statement in the prologue to his translation that he translated the *Book* from the vernacular at the command of his superiors, the survival of only one fourteenth-century copy from Italian Dominican circles (BNC, Conv. Soppr. C. 7.1170, featuring an elegant painting of Francesco Pipino in the Dominican habit at fol. 1r) is surprising, as is the relatively small number indicated in the inventories of Dominican and other religious houses.¹⁵ Other than a copy bequeathed by a friar to the Dominican convent of St Nicholas at Treviso in 1347 and that owned by the Franciscan Convent at Gubbio in the early

¹⁴ Estense 131 was probably in the Estense library by 1436 according to inventory evidence; Florence, BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170 belonged to the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella in Florence by the later fifteenth century; Ferrara, Cl.II.336 (not in Pipino's translation) belonged to an administrator to Borso d'Este: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 727-28; pp. 569-70; p. 312.

¹⁵ For the prologue, see the only available modern printed edition of Pipino's Latin, *Marka Pavlova z Benátek Milion*, ed. J. V. Prásek (Prague: České akademie Cisare Frantiska, 1902), p. 1 (future references are to Book: chapter, page number).

fourteenth century, no further conventually-owned manuscripts have been successfully identified from fourteenth-century Italian inventories and wills.¹⁶

3.2.1.2 The fifteenth century

Vernacular manuscripts

The surviving manuscript evidence for circulation of the vernacular *Book* in fifteenth-century Italy indicates that during this period it saw a significant increase in popularity in Northern Italy.¹⁷ The evidence of handwriting, decoration, colophons and ownership marks where they exist suggests for fifteenth-century manuscripts of this class a predominantly bourgeois, mercantile and administrative readership.¹⁸ Palaeographically, the hands that predominate are *mercantesca* hands of variable quality, the administrative *cancelleresca* script, and mixed cursives. There is, however, a small amount of evidence for a higher status readership of better-produced manuscripts of both the Venetian and Tuscan texts in this period.¹⁹ In addition, moreover, to bourgeois administrative and mercantile readers, palaeographic evidence indicates a possible change in the projected audience and perceived status of the vernacular *Book* that begins to occur around the mid-fifteenth century. Beginning with the earlier fifteenth-century Venetian manuscripts Venice, Marciana, It. VI.56 and Venice, Correr, Donà dalle Rose 224, and continuing throughout the *Quattrocento*, a total of eight manuscripts of the vernacular *Book* are copied employing humanist-influenced semi-gothic cursives, varieties of humanistic bookhand and humanistic cursives. In one instance, moreover, Marco's text in the

¹⁶ Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 1076-80.

¹⁷ The arrival of print does not impact upon the diffusion and reception of the *Book* until too late in the century to be considered for this thesis. The earliest imprint in Italy is Giovanni Battista Sessa's edition, *Dele meravegliose cose del Mondo* (Venice, 1496).

¹⁸ For example, BNC, Magl. XIII.73 was copied by the *podestà* of Montaione, Valdelsa. Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 322-24; the scribe of the excerpts of the work appended to a copy of Dante in the fragmentary Florence, Riccardiana 1036 (not tabulated) are copied by an otherwise unidentified Matteo Ceffoni who confesses that he does not know how to write very well, indicating that he was functionally, though not professionally, literate: Benedetto, *La tradizione manoscritta*, pp. CCX-CCXII.

¹⁹ Padua, CM 211 is, according to its colophon and arms, an owner-copied manuscript owned by the noble Vetturi family of Treviso. The evidence of fifteenth-century inventories supplied by Dutschke places one vernacular and one Latin copy of the *Book* in the library of the d'Este of Ferrara and copies of undetermined language in the libraries of the Sforza in Milan (by 1459), Pico della Mirandola (c. 1490), Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (by 1483), the Malatesta of Rimini (by 1468): Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 1076-80.

vernacular is copied with a work of Petrarch, whilst in another it is carefully annotated in a late-fifteenth century cursive with clear humanistic influence.²⁰

The appearance of humanistic hands in copies of the vernacular *Book* has a significance beyond the purely decorative. The employment of humanist-influenced scripts in copying Marco's *Book* may be indicative of the broadening of its appeal to a wider circle of readers than the lay mercantile and administrative classes. It must be noted, however, that the humanistic and humanistic-influenced hands employed in the vernacular copies of Marco's *Book* are predominately not 'pure' hands and not of the highest quality. Indeed, the usage of such hands spread significantly from their classicising, scholarly origin during the course of the *Quattrocento*, their association with culture, learning and wealth making them desirable to the aspirant middle classes, and their desirable status and readability conspiring to bring them into broader use: James Wardrop notes the gradual shift over the course of the *Quattrocento* in humanistic cursive from 'a script for special purposes [...] into a script for general purposes'.²¹ However, the use of such hands in vernacular copies of Marco Polo's *Book* may indicate a change in the perception of the *Book*'s status in some quarters. It suggests that, during the fifteenth century, the vernacular *Book* came to be viewed with increasing seriousness, making it worthy of being copied or, in the case of Vatican, BAV, Chigi lat. M.VI.140, annotated in more scholarly, higher-status scripts. Equally, these indicators also hint at a possible broadening of the socio-economic readership of the vernacular *Book* amongst those aspiring to if not engaged in the desirable and fashionable humanistic studies.

In total, the physical evidence from Italian vernacular manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries indicates that the *Book* was not popular in the courts of Northern Italy, which may have been the readership intended for it by Rustichello. Instead, however, vernacular versions of the *Book* were read primarily by the vernacular literate middle class, a group used to encountering and employing the written word professionally.²² These versions appear to have often been read, and

²⁰ Correr, Donà dalle Rose 224; BAV, Chigi lat. M.VI.140.

²¹ James Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism: Some Aspects of Humanistic Script 1460-1560* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 36.

²² The early fifteenth-century inventories of middle and artisan classes in Florence analysed by Christian Bec yielded one mention of Marco Polo: in 1414 Filippo di Piero Rinieri left a Marco Polo, on paper and probably in the vernacular, amongst his five vernacular, secular and pious books.

sometimes even copied, for leisure, rather than for practical use or study. In fact, one owner-copied manuscript in this group was copied, in 1392 according to its colophon, to ‘pass the time’.²³ Indeed, the presentation of these manuscripts conforms with the reading practices that Petrucci attributes to owner-copyists of the period. Trends in the mise-en-page, appearance of paratextual apparatus and traces of reading on Italian manuscripts over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries add a weight of evidence concerning the projected readership of the vernacular *Book*. Although, as the table of personally-viewed manuscripts in Appendix 3 shows, a majority of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century vernacular manuscripts of the sample examined for this thesis feature rubrics or other forms of chapter header, it is noteworthy that a significant minority (5 of the 12 viewed) lack such paratexts. On occasion, this lack has been supplemented by marginal scribal or readerly annotation.²⁴ As a result of this trend, a significant minority of the Italian vernacular manuscripts circulating in Italy are, in format, virtually undifferentiated blocks of narrative ill-adapted for the purposes of reference or study. The existence of a significant number of such exemplars and the relatively small proportion of manuscripts containing programmes of marginal reading direction or annotation indicate that the Italian vernacular versions did not frequently circulate amongst readers of scholarly habits, who were more likely to produce and use annotated manuscripts. These readers may perhaps be identified with those Armando Petrucci describes as reading ‘not for study but for leisure or devotion’, in a manner that, although attentive, ‘was not conditioned by the necessity for profound comprehension and critical understanding’.²⁵

Latin manuscripts

The number of surviving fifteenth-century Latin manuscripts of the *Book* is substantially greater than that of the fourteenth. As was also the case with the

Christian Bec, *Les Livres des Florentins*, p. 130. Dutschke also notes a copy in an inventory of the books of Giovanni di Michele di Baldini, a Florentine bookseller, in 1426: Petrucci, ‘Reading and Writing *Volgare*’, p. 198.

²³ The copyist, *podestà* of Cerreto Guidi, states that he copies Marco’s *Book* ‘per passare tempo’: BNC, II.II.61, fol. 40v. The manuscript also contains in its final pages many rough drawings, drawn and annotated by the scribe of the volume, indicating an association between the copying of books and leisure, creativity and imagination: fols 96v-110v.

²⁴ Florence, BNC, II.IV.136; Riccardiana 1924 (direction); BNC, Pal. 590 (annotation).

²⁵ Petrucci, ‘Reading and Writing *Volgare*’, p. 224.

fourteenth-century manuscripts, there is a considerable difference between the average level of production quality of the Latin and of the vernacular manuscripts. Six of the fourteen Latin manuscripts are in formal bookhands (generally either gothic or humanist), whereas the remainder are executed in a variety of cursive and semicursive hands, ranging from gothic and *cancelleresca*-based hands through to humanistic cursives. This suggests that a clear line of separation may be drawn between the perceived status and the socio-economic circumstances of diffusion of the Latin version of the *Book* and those of the vernacular. The Latin work is more likely to be written in a formal bookhand. It is also, as the table shows, more likely to be better-decorated and, to judge from the evidence of manuscript format and companion pieces as well as the few surviving direct pieces of ownership evidence, it was also more likely to be read in the environment of a religious institution.²⁶

As with the Italian vernacular manuscripts of the same period, several factors also indicate, to a small extent, reception of the work in circles receptive to and participating in humanist scholarship. In addition to the copy of Marco's *Book* that, according to inventory evidence, belonged to Eugenius IV, Paris, BN, f. lat. 6244 A, copied by a member of Eugenius' court between 1439 and 1440, contains an attestation by one Iacomo Barbarigo, to the effect that Marco Polo's text agrees in many particulars with that of Niccolò de' Conti, whose travel account was publicised by Poggio Bracciolini (2.4).²⁷ Similarly, Venice, Marciana, lat. X.73, written, according to its colophon, for a Paduan doctor in the arts and medicine, was originally bound with works of humanists such as Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni and Lorenzo Valla.²⁸ Vatican, BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641, furthermore, though neither copied in a humanistic script nor bound with humanistic texts, nevertheless was read, as its marginal annotation attests, by a late-fifteenth-century reader who

²⁶ One personally-viewed manuscript likely to be of institutional origin is BAV, Barb. lat. 2687, a palimpsest on a re-used document roll including a miscellany of religious-orientated travel-related material including Ricoldo da Montecroce's account of the Holy Land. Dutschke also identifies copies in the libraries of Franciscan and Dominican convents in Bologna in the late-fifteenth century: 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 1076-80.

²⁷ Eugenius' library inventory of 1443 lists a copy of the *Book*: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 1079. The attestation at fol. 122r of BN, f. lat. 6244 A was copied by scribe of BAV Vat. lat. 7317 (dated 1458), fol. 373v. The manuscripts of Poggio's work circulate often in high or exceptionally-high quality copies, executed in humanist bookhand or cursive, and generally either alone, as part of the complete text of the *De varietate fortunae*, or alongside other texts by humanist scholars like Poggio: see Poggio, *De L'Inde*, ed. by Guéret-Laferté, pp. 60-65.

²⁸ Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 960.

used an italic script and, as will be seen in 5.4.1.1, probably had interests in humanist philosophical debates.²⁹ BAV, Vat. lat. 7317, in addition to containing a copy of Iacomo Barbarigo's attestation as to the truth of Marco's *Book* that uses Niccolò de' Conti's account as a measure of its truth, also contains a copy of Niccolò's account from Book IV of Poggio's *De varietate fortunae*. Such features not only indicate readerly recognition of Marco's *Book* as belonging to a 'genre' of works concerning travel and the East that came, in some circles, to be thought worthy of serious, scholarly consideration, but they link it by association with the circle of humanist scholars under the influence of Poggio and the circle of Eugenius IV.

3.2.2 The Francophone continent

3.2.2.1 The fourteenth century

French manuscripts

The surviving French language manuscripts of the *Book* that originated in fourteenth-century Francophone areas are, with only one exception, of its so-called Court French version.³⁰ The Court French version, deriving, according to the text's own prologue, from a copy of the *Book* brought to France for Charles de Valois in

²⁹ The manuscript contains annotation in a humanist-influenced cursive that Dutschke dates as late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century, a dating bracket that is probably influenced by the appearance of a reference in the margin of fol. 62v to Pierre Gilles (1490-1555). However, a comparison of letter forms present in the notes clearly indicates two phases of marginal annotation. The majority of the notes are written in a cursive heavily under humanistic influence, but one that uses only the gothic cursive 'd' (uncial form), an 'r' close to the modern typographical form, a tightly-curved final 's', and a 'p' formed as a looped cross (henceforth Hand A). The marginal reference to Pierre Gilles, however, is in a hand with a rightward-leaning 'd' whose ascender ends in a turn to the right that Wardrop (*The Script of Humanism*, p. 38) identifies as occasionally present in fifteenth-century hands but 'standard in the sixteenth century' (henceforth Hand B). This form does not appear in the notes of Hand A. Also distinctive are Hand B's very loose, current 'r' and 's' form, and a very current 'p' formed not as a cross, but by bringing the descender up, then round to the right, but leaving the loop slightly open. The hand of the 1546 ownership inscription on the verso of the volume's second parchment flyleaf by Dionigi Atanagi displays these same characteristics. In short, I suggest that, whilst the note on Pierre Gilles and the ownership mark are in a free and current italic-influenced cursive with at least one distinctive sixteenth-century form, the majority of the notes (and all those tabulated for this thesis) are in a more formal, controlled cursive whose features are consistent with later fifteenth-century administrative cursives. For an example of a late-fifteenth-century humanistic cursive employed in a notarial context see Vincenzo Federici, *La scrittura delle cancellerie Italiane. Dal secolo XII al XVII: Facsimili per le scuole di palaeografia degli Archivi di Stato*, 2 vols (Rome: Sansoni, 1934), II., plate XCIV (Florence, 1477-1490).

³⁰ Dutschke refers to the 'Court French' as an 'umbrella version', as it is in fact a textual family comprising four distinct groups. Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 38; *Le Devisement du monde*, ed. by P. Ménard (Geneva: Droz, 2001-), I, 40-70.

1307 by the envoy Thibaut de Cépoÿ,³¹ is a *rémaniement* of the Franco-Italian original text which, whilst preserving the majority of the detail of the Franco-Italian, both renders it into a French of Northern France and re-orders the sometimes disorderly Franco-Italian text into a more logical shape.³² The non-fragmentary vernacular manuscripts that survive from fourteenth-century Francophone regions are few, but of high status.³³ Three are executed in traditional gothic bookhands, on parchment and with mid-range or high levels of decoration, indicating not only that the production of the *Book* was in the hands of professional scribes, but also that it was in the hands of scribes trained specifically in book production, rather than of those trained in other areas of administrative work.³⁴ The copy found in London, BL, Royal 19.D.I, a very large manuscript with high production values and illuminated with 38 miniatures, stands out as a particularly ostentatious production, even if its illuminations are not of the highest quality.³⁵ The evidence of wealthy readership provided by the production quality of these manuscripts is, moreover, supported by that available from colophons and ownership marks as detailed in Table 1. Inventory evidence also places as yet unidentified or no longer extant manuscripts of the *Book* in French in the libraries of Mahout, Duchess of Arras and Burgundy (ordered in 1312), and of the French royal family.³⁶

Latin manuscripts

The surviving fourteenth-century Latin manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book* that derive from these regions, few though they are, nevertheless suggest a different

³¹ The text of Paris, BN, f. fr. 5649 has been edited and translated into modern French by Pierre-Yves Badel, Marco Polo, *La Description du monde* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1998). This edition (henceforth *La Description du monde*) is employed in the present thesis. The prologue is at p. 47.

³² For example, the Court French synthesises the original Franco-Italian text's loose, uneconomical disparate chapters on Seilan (Sri Lanka; *Divisament*, 173 and 178, pp. 550-51 and 572-77) into a single, shorter and more tightly-structured chapter. Within this new chapter structure, the shape of the story remains broadly unchanged, but a rather long section illustrating the first step on the Buddha's road to enlightenment is removed. See *La Description du monde*, pp. 408-10.

³³ In addition to the complete manuscripts detailed in Table 1 two fragments also survive. BN, f. fr. 934 and Paris, BN n. a. lat. MS 1529 are both too fragmentary to be analysed in full. Both fragments are in gothic bookhands.

³⁴ The exception here, BAV, Ottob. lat. 2207, is a French translation from a Catalan version: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 463-63.

³⁵ For a discussion of this manuscript and its relationship to Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264, see Dutschke, 'The Truth in the Book: The Marco Polo Texts in Royal 19.D.I and Bodley 264', *Scriptorium*, 52 (1998), 278-300. Dutschke cites Richard and Mary Rouse's identification of Royal 19.D.I as a product of the workshop of the Montbaston workshop of Paris: p. 287.

³⁶ Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 1076-80.

pattern of diffusion from that for its French manuscripts. As Table 1 shows, two of the four manuscripts are in the cursive and semi-cursive hands traditionally employed for administrative work or note-taking and then, later, for the copying of lower status texts. Indeed, one of these, Paris, BN, n.a. lat. 1768, is a truly badly-written and incomplete text, whose scribe, presumably with an eye to economy, has written in long lines almost to the edges of the page in many places.³⁷ One of the manuscripts, Paris, BN, f. lat. 17800, has marginal direction in the hand of the manuscript's corrector and a small amount of later readerly annotation consistent with use for reference or study purposes.³⁸ This medium-format well-produced manuscript, laid out in two columns, rubricated and featuring scribal correction and annotation, is undoubtedly of institutional production and use. Of the manuscripts I have viewed in person, one further can be identified fairly securely as an institutional production. The incomplete *Liber* in London, BL, Add. 19513, also a medium-format, well-decorated and rubricated manuscript, written in two columns in a clear rounded gothic, is laid out as an institutional production. This manuscript, which in addition to Marco's *Book* contains the *Mirabilia descripta* of Jordanus Catalani and the unique manuscript of Philip of Slane's abridgement of Gerald of Wales' *Topographia hibernica*, the latter written at the instigation of John XXII and the former closely linked to his court, is suspected by its most recent commentator to have been produced in the milieu of the papal curia at Avignon.³⁹

3.2.2.2 The fifteenth century

French manuscripts

The fifteenth-century pattern of diffusion of French-language manuscripts of Marco's *Book* shows no significant broadening of the readership of the work beyond the fourteenth-century core audience of royal and noble patrons. Surviving manuscripts continue to be copied in high-status scripts (gothic bookhands and high-quality bâtarde), and to be highly decorated, sometimes featuring figurative

³⁷Owned by the Dominicans of Paris in 1529. The ownership mark appears at fol. 20v.

³⁸Dutschke suggests that the marginal notes are sixteenth century: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 850. In my opinion, however, there are some in the hand of the volume's corrector with a few, sometimes badly rubbed, notes in a secretary hand of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century written across what appears to have been a specially-added strip of parchment pasted to the right-hand side of every folio.

³⁹Gadrat, 'Jordan Catala de Sévérac', p. 271.

illustrations of the customs and creatures the text describes.⁴⁰ Moreover, in a period in which paper was less expensive and more available, the French-language manuscripts continue almost exclusively to employ the more costly and more durable parchment as a support. As befits the luxury appearance of these manuscripts, a considerable proportion are known from inventory evidence to have been in royal or noble ownership before the end of the fifteenth century.⁴¹

Although, as I have outlined above, the fifteenth-century diffusion patterns for Marco Polo's *Book* in Francophone areas for the most part continue those established in the fourteenth century, there occurs around 1450 one significant development. Two high-quality, mid- and late-fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts survive of a retranslation of the work based on the Latin version of the Dominican Francesco Pipino (London, BL, Egerton 2176, Stockholm M. 305). The ownership and readership milieu of these two manuscripts is very similar to that of the Court French redaction, indicating that this *remaniement* was perhaps intended to constitute a linguistic or stylistic updating of an already available work.⁴²

The difference between the circumstances of the diffusion of the vernacular *Book* in France and in Italy indicate a striking difference in their readership in socio-economic terms. The surviving Italian vernacular manuscripts are generally lower-grade productions, circulating in mercantile and administrative environments. The vernacular manuscripts circulating in Francophone areas appear by contrast to have been predominantly high-status productions, read in royal and noble circles. Often lavishly illuminated and illustrated, and bound with works relating to travel, the exotic, the marvellous, and, specifically, the Great Khan, such as Odorico's *Relatio*, *Mandeville's Travels* and John of Cori's *Livre de l'estaat du Grand Caam*, the work appears to have been presented and read as a luxury item suggesting the possibility of entertainment and perhaps mental escape to its readers. Rarely do such manuscripts bear traces of use for scholarly or reference purposes.⁴³ Whilst the

⁴⁰ BN, f. fr. 2810, Morgan, M.723 and Brussels 9309-10 all feature figurative illustration, the former two featuring an extensive programme of miniatures.

⁴¹ See the ownership details in Table 1: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 414; 302; 331; 421.

⁴² Stockholm M 305 has a colophon placing it or possibly an exemplar in the ownership of a senior administrator of the royal court at Paris (fol. 101r): Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 452.

⁴³ Stockholm M 304 and Stockholm M 305 are exceptional in this way. The former, a mid-fourteenth-century manuscript of the Court French family, is extensively annotated, in Latin, in a rounded humanistic bookhand of the fifteenth century. The same hand adds a world map to the empty final

socio-economic circumstances that bore upon vernacular literacy levels clearly differed between Italy and Francophone areas, the sharp and absolute distinction between the reception of the work in these two geographical and cultural areas is nevertheless striking.⁴⁴ Whereas noble readers on the Italian peninsula appear to have remained for the most part either ignorant or disdainful of the work both in its vernacular and Latin versions until at least the early to mid-fifteenth century, the vernacular French *Book* circulated primarily amongst wealthy, high-status classes during the fourteenth century, and no evidence has to date been uncovered for any significant level of circulation amongst administrative or mercantile middle classes, or in ecclesiastical or monastic environments.

Latin manuscripts

At a total of five, the number of surviving manuscripts of the Latin *Book* in France from the fifteenth century is only slightly higher than that of those from the fourteenth. Manuscript formats, content and surviving ownership information suggest mixed circles of diffusion. The sole copy to exhibit very high production values is also the sole copy linked to a monastic institution (Ghent 13),⁴⁵ known to have been copied for a Benedictine abbot, whereas another (Paris, BN, f. lat. 1616), was a varied miscellany copied in a neat, but not *formata*, batârde. Containing some letters and treatises of the Italian humanists, this manuscript was owned by a canon lawyer who probably furnished the manuscript with its table of contents, pagination, and marginal annotation.⁴⁶

Overall, the codicological features of the fifteenth-century Latin manuscripts of the *Book* from Francophone regions set out in Table 1 indicate Marco's *Book* in the

folio (fol. 100v) of the volume. See *Le Livre de Marco Polo: Fac-simile d'un manuscrit du xiv^e siècle conservé a la bibliothèque royale de Stockholm*, intro. by A. E. Nordenskiöld (Stockholm: Institut lithographique de l'État-Majeur, 1882). Stockholm, M 305 has some minor marginal additions and corrections, and a number of marginal noting signs. Thanks are due to Dr Suzanne Paul, who examined the latter manuscript on my behalf, for this information.

⁴⁴ Geneviève Hesenoher prefaces her discussion of 'les bibliothèques des laïcs' over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with a note that only a 'tiny proportion' ('une infime partie') of the wills of bourgeois, merchants and artisans allude to books and also suggests based on this testamentary research that the number of households furnished with books 'remains more or less stable' between 1300 and 1490: 'L'essor des bibliothèques privées aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles', in *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises*, 4 vols, ed. by André Vernet (Paris: Promodis, 1989), I, *Les Bibliothèques médiévales du VI^e siècle a 1530*, 215-63 (p. 242).

⁴⁵ Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 575-94.

⁴⁶ The ownership inscription on fol. 1r is in a secretary hand consistent with the contents list on the same page, the pagination, and the marginal notes, though these are fairly sparse in Marco's *Book*.

Latin being treated as a lower- to medium-status work, perhaps of some scholarly interest. The lack of manuscripts in lower status scripts is noteworthy, as is the low number definitively attributed to monastic libraries.⁴⁷

3.2.3 England

3.2.3.1 The fourteenth century

French manuscripts

There is a little evidence of a very low level of circulation of French-language manuscripts of Marco's *Book* in England in the fourteenth century. Though the evidence is small, the surviving exemplars testify to some knowledge of the *Book* amongst wealthy and high-status families. Oxford, Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 761, a paper miscellany of the 1360s, incorporates excerpts from a Court French version of Marco Polo's *Book*, and was owned and used, as is clear from some of the notes it contains, by medical professionals in the employ of the well-connected de Bohun family (Earls of Hereford).⁴⁸ This suggests, of course, the existence of a manuscript of the Court French *Book* within the same circle from which the excerpts could be copied.

Very surprising is the surviving fragment of BL, Cotton Otho D.V, heavily damaged by fire in 1731. The fragment may date from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, and has been identified as being of the Franco-Italian version (close to F), copied in an insular, anglicana hand and showing some Anglo-Norman dialectal features. This would indicate the arrival, possibly directly from Italy, of a Franco-Italian redaction of the *Book* in fourteenth-century England.⁴⁹ These fragments do not, however, provide sufficient evidence to hypothesise any wide extent of diffusion of the French *Book* in fourteenth-century England.

⁴⁷ There is a possibility that Gerard Leeu's printed edition of Pipino's translation, produced in Gouda and dating from 1483-4, may have influenced the diffusion of the work in Francophone regions to the detriment of the survival rate of the lower quality Latin manuscripts of the work from the same period. Ghent13 and El Escorial Q.II.13 were both probably copied from Leeu's edition: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 583, p. 559. Evidence from published inventories has so far only thrown up one further instance of a Latin manuscript of the work in this period and region that has not been identified. A copy is recorded in the inventory of the library of Benedict XIII at Avignon in 1407: Marie-Henriette Julien de Pommerol et Jacques Monfrin, 'La Bibliothèque pontificale à Avignon au XIVe siècle', in *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises*, I, pp. 147-69 (p. 160).

⁴⁸ The fragment is printed and discussed by P. Meyer, 'Notice du MS. Bodley 761 de la Bibliothèque Bodléienne', *Romania*, 37 (1908) 509-28.

⁴⁹ The fragment is discussed by Ménard in his introduction to *Le Devisement du monde*, I, 49-50.

Latin manuscripts

By comparison with the rather low level of diffusion of the vernacular *Book* in England over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the number of surviving Latin manuscripts of the work, all of which contain versions of Pipino's translation, suggests a relatively widespread and healthy diffusion of the work, particularly in the ambit of scholarly and religious institutions.⁵⁰ Although only two of the nine surviving fourteenth-century Latin manuscripts of the *Book* are of established institutional provenance, a further three or possibly four can be judged, on the basis of their format, very likely to derive from unidentified religious institutions.⁵¹ The manuscripts in this category are remarkably consistent in format. Of the eight manuscripts in this category, the majority are in mid- to higher-quality Anglicana or gothic hands of higher quality, with low to medium levels of decoration. As can be seen from Table 3, they are regularly provided with rubrics assisting use of the work, and are in all but one case supplied with either marginal paratext or readerly annotation, indicating either projected or actual usage by readers of scholarly habits.

3.2.3.2 The fifteenth century

French manuscripts

Only one manuscript in this category survives, indicating a continuation of the trend of low-level circulation of the vernacular *Book* from fourteenth-century England. As Dutschke has noted, it is possible, however, in this instance to pinpoint the precise chain of transmission of the *Book*.⁵² The luxury fourteenth-century Parisian manuscript, BL, Royal 19.D.I must have arrived in England by the end of the first decade of the fifteenth century, where it was copied into Oxford, Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264 by the second scribe of this large, luxury, composite manuscript. The later manuscript, following its French model, is lavishly illuminated, and at one stage was

⁵⁰ Inventory evidence attributes a copy of Marco Polo, probably in Latin, to Richard Exeter, a Benedictine of Westminster in 1397: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 1099.

⁵¹ Cambridge, UL Dd 1.17 and Cambridge, UL Dd 8.7, both in the region of half a metre high (44 x 30cms and 40 x 29cms respectively) and with text laid out in two columns and carefully corrected and equipped with reading direction, are both volumes, primarily in Latin, for reading at benches and thus unlikely to have been used outside institutional libraries. BL, Royal 14. C. XIII, a smaller format volume but similarly laid out, belonged to Norwich Cathedral Priory (fol. 14r). The workmanlike, scholarly and documentary hands of London, BL, Arundel 13 and Cambridge, G&C 162/83, along with their programmes of marginal annotation and, in the latter instance, reading direction, suggest possible institutional ownership for both.

⁵² This summary is from Dutschke's extended discussion in 'The Truth in the Book', pp. 296-97.

in the ownership of Edward III's youngest son, Thomas, the Duke of Gloucester. The manuscript contains a section written in Flanders as well as the text of Marco Polo copied in England. The Romances of Alexander, including Alexander's voyage to Paradise and the legendary correspondence between Alexander and Dindimus, King of the Brahmans, indicate Marco's *Book* here making a transition from the context of accounts and texts relating to the near-contemporary East to accounts and texts relating to the timeless and fabulous East. To underline this change, its illuminations, as Dutschke points out, often have very little to do with the chapters of the text they purport to illustrate, presenting instead images of the standard monsters and wonders of the East such as the traditional monstrous races.⁵³ Clearly laid out and well-rubricated, Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264 is provided neither with marginal paratext nor supplemented with marginal annotation. This, in addition to the all-too-evident disjunction between its images and its text, indicates that it was expected to function rather more as an object of display to inspire wonder than a text to be interactively read and learned from.

Latin manuscripts

Of the three surviving Latin manuscripts of the *Book*, in Francesco Pipino's translation, produced in England in the fifteenth century, it is noteworthy that one complete manuscript (TCD 632) as well as one collection of excerpts (Bodl. Lib., Digby 196) appear from their format and production values to be non-professional productions, copied by readers for their own information and education.⁵⁴ Both manuscripts are varied, personal miscellanies. Bodl. Lib, Digby 196 takes the form of extracts from Pipino's translation scattered throughout a miscellany of information of a geographical nature, much of which is taken from Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*. Of the four manuscripts in this category, one is of known monastic manufacture, and another in ecclesiastical ownership.⁵⁵

⁵³ The images that open and are scattered through the book's 'livre dynde', as its final third is termed (fol. 260r) feature for the most part well-executed but standard representations of the monstrous races and other features associated with India that appear no-where in Marco's text: wild men, dog-headed men and men with faces in their chests (fol. 260r); horned men and cannibals (fol. 262r), pilgrims at the tomb of St. Thomas (fol. 266v). See the digitised manuscript at <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msbodl264>.

⁵⁴ As a collection of excerpts, Bodl. Lib., Digby 196 (viewed in person) is not presented in Table 1.

⁵⁵ The *Historia aurea* in Cambridge, CCC 5 belonged to St. Albans Abbey: V. H. Galbraith, 'The *Historia aurea* of John, vicar of Tynemouth and the sources of the St. Albans Chronicle (1327-1377)'

The primary audience for Marco Polo's *Book* in England appears to have been amongst readers in conventual, monastic, ecclesiastical or scholarly circles. Read by only a very few nobles and their circles as an exotic vernacular entertainment, it appears, by contrast with the situation in France, to have been principally copied and read in Latin, often, as Table 3 shows, with the apparatus normally belonging to scholarly texts such as rubrication, and marginal paratext. In the instances where it appears within John of Tynemouth's *Historia aurea*, entries relating to the *Book* appear in the *Historia*'s general index, further fitting it for studious use.⁵⁶

3.3 Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio*

Manuscripts of Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio* survive across Europe in a multiplicity of Latin and vernacular versions.⁵⁷ The transmission history of this work is an issue of great complexity that cannot be discussed in detail here. Instead, I offer a brief overview of the textual versions circulating in Italy, France and England in the period in question in order to facilitate the reading of the forthcoming chapters. The fullest survey of the Latin versions is that of Paolo Chiesa, who has identified four major recensions of the work based on criteria such as their incipits and explicits, colophons of redactors and the inclusion and positioning or omission of certain passages of the text.⁵⁸

Of the four major recensions that Chiesa identifies, two appear, on internal evidence, to be of early date. The recension of Odorico's confrère Guglielmo da

in *Essays in History Presented to Reginald Lane Poole*, ed. by H. W. C. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 379-98 (p. 385). See Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 602-15.

⁵⁶ Dutschke notes that only two manuscripts of the *Book* that she examined featured subject indexes, and both indexes were post-medieval: 'Francesco Pipino', p. 28. In the Lambeth copy the index, whose entries refer to the manuscript's contemporary foliation, is bound without foliation at the opening of MS 12. In the Corpus Christi copy the index opens MS 5 and is foliated separately in roman numerals (the main text has a contemporary arabic foliation).

⁵⁷ Around 115 manuscripts of the work survive worldwide. I have ascertained this information by collating the handlists of Giulio Cesare Testa ('Bozza per un censimento dei manoscritti Odoricioni', in Melis, ed., *Odorico da Pordenone e la Cina*, pp. 117-150), Lucio Monaco ('I volgarizzamenti italiani della Relazione di Odorico da Pordenone', *Studi Mediolatini e Volgari*, 26 (1978), 179-219, an important article that establishes the existence of two distinct *volgare* textual traditions, defined as 'group 1' and the 'memoriale toscano') and Paolo Chiesa ('Per un riordino della tradizione manoscritta della Relatio di Odorico', *Filologia Mediolatina*, 6-7 (1999-2000), 311-50). All surviving handlists do not precisely agree, hence the approximate figure. No comprehensive system of *sigla* exists for designating textual versions and their individual manuscript manifestations.

⁵⁸ Paolo Chiesa, 'Per un riordino' pp. 320-33, with errata corrected in Paolo Chiesa, 'Una forma redazionale sconosciuta della "Relatio" latina di Odorico di Pordenone', *Itineraria*, 2 (2003), 137-64. Chiesa identifies two further recensions, the first of which is a broad, loose grouping of epitomised or abbreviated versions of the work, and the second a version that circulated largely in Germany.

Solagna, the most numerous in terms of manuscript witnesses, ends with the named scribe dating his writing down of the work to 1330. Some manuscripts of this recension end with a brief chapter detailing the death of Odorico in 1331, though a small number do not have this chapter, indicating that this version may have begun to circulate whilst Odorico was still alive.

In the second apparently early recension, termed by Chiesa the *Recensio Marchesini*, Guglielmo is not named as Odorico's amanuensis, but another Franciscan named Marchesino de Bassiano adds, following the death of Odorico, certain personal recollections of Odorico's stories of his travels that do not appear elsewhere in the text.⁵⁹ This recension is likely to have been the base text for the recension of another Franciscan, the Bohemian Henry of Glatz.⁶⁰ Henry states in his subscript that he met some of Odorico's fellow friars and companions whilst in Avignon, where, according to Henry's account, they appear to have been engaged in what can best be described as a public relations exercise to promote the sanctity of their companion at the papal court.⁶¹ On his return to Prague, Henry recast the *Relatio* into more elegant Latin, completing it in 1340.

The final major recension that Chiesa notes is that which he terms the *Recensio Guecelli* after the name of the notary who collated its contents at the request of his Udine superiors.⁶² The notary Guecello therefore, at the request of the consul of Udine, added a number of miracles to his source (the account of Guglielmo), including an amplified account of a journey to Avignon that Odorico is reported to have attempted immediately prior to his death in search of additional support for his missionary endeavours, but from which he was deterred by a miraculous vision of the founder of his Order, St. Francis.⁶³

The surviving vernacular versions of Odorico's text that will be referred to in this thesis are all translations or reworkings based upon one or another of these Latin versions (largely the *Guillelmi*). More precise details concerning these relationships will be given and referenced in the appropriate sections below.

⁵⁹ Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 318.

⁶⁰ Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 318.

⁶¹ Yule-Cordier, II, 16; Henry accesses the manuscript and obtains details of Odorico's life from 'sociis suis' in Avignon: Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 347.

⁶² Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 330.

Table 1: Surviving manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* from England, France and Italy: Summary

	Total	Fourteenth-century manuscripts		Fifteenth-century manuscripts	
		<i>Volgare</i>	Latin	<i>Volgare</i>	Latin
Italy	26 (27)	4	4	12	6 (1)
		French	Latin	French	Latin
France	12	4	2	4	2
		French	Latin	French	Latin
England	9 (10)	0	6	0	3 (1)

Fragments, not included in the numbers in boldface, are given in parentheses.

3.3.1 The Italian States

Odorico's *Relatio* circulated in Italy in both Latin and vernacular versions. Of the Latin versions, the most numerically dominant amongst surviving manuscripts is its earliest known recension, that of Guglielmo da Solagna.⁶⁴ In the vernacular, the work circulated, according to Lucio Monaco, in two main versions. The majority of vernacular manuscripts belong to Group 1, which derives from a translation of Guglielmo da Solagna's redaction and whose incipit, presumably with an eye to the attraction of the marvellous, introduced the work as the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose*.⁶⁵ These lack the account of Odorico's final journey and death that occurs in the subsequent Latin redactions.⁶⁶ Group 2, the surviving manuscripts of which are generally later in date than those of Group 1, is a *volgarizzamento* that exhibits substantial differences both from the Group 1 text and from all surviving Latin versions. In addition to excising Odorico's extended account of the Franciscan martyrdoms at Tana, the Group 2 version, christened the 'Memoriale toscano' by Monaco, also contains some surprising and apparently genuine additions to Odorico's account.⁶⁷ However, based on a textual comparison of the *memoriale*, several manuscripts of Group 1 and Guglielmo da Solagna's version, Monaco has concluded that the *Memoriale*, rather than retaining elements of some primitive, pre-Latin vernacular *Relatio*, is a later translation exhibiting some passages that do not

⁶³ Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 335.

⁶⁴ Based on Chiesa's table of the Latin versions, eight Italian pre-1500 manuscripts of the *Guillelmi* survive by comparison with only two of the *Marchesini*. No Latin manuscripts survive of any other redactions of known Italian origin. Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 350.

⁶⁵ This version has been edited as the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose: volgarizzamento italiano del secolo XIV dell'Itinerarium di Odorico da Pordenone*, ed. by Alvise Andreose (Padua: Centro studi antoniani, 2000).

⁶⁶ Explicits are given for most Group 1 manuscripts in Monaco, 'I volgarizzamenti', pp. 184-98.

⁶⁷ Such additions include fuller information on Franciscan and Dominican convents in Tabriz and Sultaniyeh, and an account of marriage customs at Tana: Monaco, 'I volgarizzamenti', pp. 216-17.

appear in any other versions of the text, as well as some omissions.⁶⁸ The curious phenomenon of these supplementary passages has yet to be satisfactorily explained, but is only tangentially relevant to the question of the reading, reception and re-use of the work.

3.3.1.1 The fourteenth century

As with manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book*, the surviving manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* (see Table 2 for presentation summary) of Italian origin imply some significant differences in the circumstances of the work's diffusion over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Only eight fourteenth-century manuscripts of the work survive, in comparison with nineteen (and one fragment) from the fifteenth century. The eight fourteenth-century copies divide equally into Latin and vernacular copies. The Latin versions from this period are all copies of the *Guillelmi* recension, which may indicate that the reworked versions of Odorico's account, containing the account of his final journey and death, were composed largely for external consumption and, specifically, that of the papal curia.⁶⁹

The available evidence of language, colophons and provenances indicates that the work's diffusion was largely limited to the northerly part of the Italian peninsula. Although direct evidence of ownership is patchy, some manuscripts, both Latin and vernacular, can be linked to conventual or other institutional homes. Florence, BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170 and Assisi 343 are known to have been owned by Dominican and Franciscan convents in Florence and Pordenone respectively.⁷⁰ Paris, BN, f. lat. 2584, moreover, a miscellany manuscript of Italian origin containing exegetical material and sermons, was also undoubtedly, given its combination of religious contents with two-column layout, good quality gothic textura and marginal paratext,

⁶⁸ Monaco hypothesises in 'I volgarizzamenti' (p. 219) that the *Memoriale* is a later reworking of the *Relatio*. In his 1990 edition of the text, however, he suggests instead that it is a 'riassunto' ('summary') of the work, deriving ultimately from a different and no longer surviving original redaction of Guglielmo da Solagna's text of which no manuscripts survive, and perhaps enriched by details preserved as marginal glosses to these now lost manuscripts: Odorico da Pordenone, *Memoriale Toscano*, ed. by Lucio Monaco ([Alessandria]: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1990), p. 34. Andreose takes the view, unsupported by surviving manuscript evidence, that the additional material is the result of the incorporation of accrued marginal glosses from other sources into the main text: Odorico, *Libro delle Nuove*, p. 46 n.

⁶⁹ The *Guecelli* version was sent by Pagano della Torre, the Patriarch of Aquileia, to John XXII at Avignon, supplemented by a number of miracles performed at Odorico's tomb: Giulio Cesare Testa, 'Bozza', pp. 117-50 (p. 136, n. 141).

⁷⁰ For Assisi 343 see Testa, 'Bozza', p. 121.

produced in or for a religious institution with a preaching focus. The evidence of inventories adds a little to this picture, placing a copy in the Dominican convent of S. Nicolò in Treviso after 1347, and a copy in the Franciscan Convent at Gubbio in 1360.⁷¹

Vernacular manuscripts

Of the four surviving vernacular manuscripts of this period, three are copied in less formal hands (*mercantesca*, *cancelleresca*, mixed cursive) more often associated with lay and sometimes non-professional use. Two copies appear in varied miscellanies of probable lay readership. These miscellanies include both pious and secular material in the vernacular, copied in *mercantesca* and *cancelleresca*.⁷² The latter of these, BAV, Urb. lat. 1013, is of particular interest: illustrated by a series of well-executed line-drawings in what appears to be the hand of the scribe, it is copied in a classic, professional *cancelleresca*, giving it the general appearance of a careful and well-produced, though not ostentatious, production. Only BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170, discussed above, is a vernacular manuscript of this period clearly associated with a religious institution. Even with such a small number of manuscripts, it is perhaps possible to detect a trend for the inclusion of the vernacular *Relatio* in highly personal, perhaps owner-copied, miscellanies.

Latin manuscripts

The Latin manuscripts alluded to above are executed in formal gothic bookhands as would be expected of institutional manuscripts, yet they do not benefit from high levels of decoration, as one would expect of particularly prized manuscripts. As I have mentioned, BN, f. lat. 2584 has had its layout complemented by scribal marginal paratext. This includes both running headers at the top of each folio, and marginal notes relating to specific aspects of the text. The remaining manuscript in this category that I have personally viewed, Rome, Casanatense, 276, is, though written in a rounded gothic, in a very low quality hand with many errors. It is undecorated, further indicating its lower status, and unmarked in its margins.

⁷¹ Testa, 'Bozza', pp. 138, 139.

⁷² Florence, BNC, II.II.15 contains, for example, a vernacular treatise on the body and soul alongside collections of legends and rhymed proverbs in the vernacular. BAV, Urb. lat. 1013 contains legends alongside articles of the faith, prayers, magic formulas and a medical tract, as well as a collection of dated notes relating to events witnessed by their author (fol. 32v).

Irrespective of the work's mendicant credentials, then, and of Odorico's confrères' attempts to promote his sanctity, there is no evidence that this text, in its original Latin and in its intended fourteenth-century context, circulated widely or was held in great esteem in communities like his own, for which it was undoubtedly first produced.

3.3.1.2 The fifteenth century

Vernacular manuscripts

The vernacular diffusion of Odorico's work in fifteenth-century Italy is more extensive than its Latin diffusion, and appears variable in terms of its audience. Of the Italian vernacular manuscripts from this period, the large majority are executed in lower-status cursives including *mercantescas* and *cancellerescas* of medium and low quality. When the *Relatio*, whether in its Latin or vernacular versions, is bound with other works, it tends to appear in varied miscellanies, of a personal nature, often including other travel-related material. Many of these — perhaps as many as seven — meet the criteria of Petrucci's suggested format for owner copied books, distinguished by lower quality, sometimes irregularly-written scripts, low decoration quality and miscellaneous, often highly personal content, and a lack of scribal or readerly marginalia.⁷³ Of those personally viewed, those that meet these criteria include BAV, Barb. lat. 4047, a varied miscellany of pious and secular material of which the ownership mark, that of 'Andrea di Lorenzo di Cieffo di Masino Ceffi del popolo di San Simone di Firenze' (fol. 140v) is in a scruffy *mercantesca*-influenced cursive very similar to that of the text, indicating that it was owner-copied. Also probably owner-copied is Rome, Angelica, 2212, whose scribe explores a variety of different writing styles throughout the manuscript.

A further two manuscripts are, it has been suggested by Monaco, the products of booksellers' workshops.⁷⁴ If this assessment is correct, it indicates that the vernacular *Relatio* became sufficiently popular in this period to be copied in a professional context. The surviving so-called 'booksellers'' copies are, however, as far as can be ascertained, of economical production with the low levels of decoration that indicate a lower socio-economic range of readers. Only two manuscripts of this

⁷³ Armando Petrucci, 'Reading and Writing *Volgare*', p. 183.

⁷⁴ Riccardiana 683 and Marciana, It.VI.585: Monaco, 'I volgarizzamenti', pp. 202, 208-09.

category benefited, as far as I have been able to ascertain, from the high levels of decoration that indicate a wealthy readership. Of these, Vatican, BAV, Barb. lat. 4048 is a copy in an elegant humanist cursive and accompanies a copy of Goro Dati's *Sfera* with beautifully illustrated maps and belonged to an unidentified female religious order.⁷⁵

Latin manuscripts

There is a significant rise in the survival rate of manuscripts of the *Relatio* in this region dating from the fifteenth century. Of the eighteen non-fragmentary manuscripts that survive, however, only six are in Latin. Amongst owners of the Latin manuscripts we once again see religious institutions represented, but nevertheless not to the degree one might expect. The Udinese Latin manuscript from the Archiepiscopal library that dates from this time may be one of the fifteenth-century manuscripts from the Franciscan convent identified by Testa.⁷⁶ However, the scribe of the Southern Italian Latin manuscript Florence, BNC, Magl. VII. 1334 does not identify himself as a religious, and a badly-damaged ownership mark in the same book appears to place it in secular ownership in the later fifteenth century.⁷⁷ There is, moreover, a surprising lack of fifteenth-century inventory evidence for ownership of the *Relatio* by Franciscan and Dominican convents. In 1481, two manuscripts of the *passiones* of the Franciscans martyred at Tana in India in 1321 are listed in the inventory of the library of the Franciscans of Siena but, although this narrative normally circulated in the context of Odorico's *Relatio*, in these instances he is not mentioned, thus a separate text is indicated.⁷⁸ The surviving Latin manuscripts for this period examined in the sample (Table 4) are lower quality productions with little or no decoration. Florence, BNC, II.IV.277, for example, now in a composite volume that gives no indication of its original manuscript context, is written in long lines in a *cancelleresca* but uses *gotica rotunda* for rubrics. Regular red paragraph

⁷⁵ Suggested by Alvisè Andreose on the basis of the owner's device, found at fol. 1r: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 72.

⁷⁶ Testa, 'Bozza', pp. 139-40.

⁷⁷ 'ego bartolomeus de luparis de ueneciis hunc librum scripsi' (fol. 30r). The mark appears to give a history of ownership of the book, but the names of the owners are unfortunately on very damaged parts of the page. The sections that can be clearly read suggest a succession of secular owners: 'questo libro edi matteo dantte[.....] elquale chonperò da sopradetto [.....]', leading back to a donation record concerning a 'Zanobi' (further names indecipherable) but dated 1483: fol 1r.

⁷⁸K. W. Humphreys, 'The Library of the Franciscans of Siena in the Late Fifteenth Century', in *Studies in the History of Libraries*, 4 (Amsterdam: Erasmus, 1978), pp. 123, 161.

marks in the text and margin along with occasional marginal paratext in red ink give the volume a certain schoolroom appearance. BNC, Magl. VII.1334, however, though it contains a low level of decoration, is written in a very neat, clear, sparsely abbreviated gothic minuscule with humanistic influence in size and spacing. This manuscript's combination of prayers, the *Divina commedia* and verses upon it gives the impression of a highly personal compilation.

This overview has shown that, although the *Relatio* enjoyed a greater diffusion in the Italian peninsula during the fifteenth century than in the fourteenth, it did not circulate widely, whether in the Latin or the vernaculars, amongst the wealthier and higher status members of society, whether lay, or in scholarly, ecclesiastical or monastic institutions.⁷⁹ The small number of copies (two, as far as could be ascertained) that show humanistic influence in their scripts or copied in the company of literary or scholarly texts indicate a work not accorded a scholarly status by its copyists and owners, and unlikely to have circulated in humanist circles. The evidence suggests, instead, that it circulated amongst the literate laity, sometimes disseminated through the unofficial channels of loans and owner-copying, and sometimes by booksellers and stationers.

3.3.2 The Francophone continent

3.3.2.1 The fourteenth century

French manuscripts

Like Marco Polo's *Book*, Odorico's *Relatio* appears to have undergone a transformation in terms of its readership coinciding with its crossing of the geographical distance from Italy to the Francophone regions, and into the French language itself.⁸⁰ The four fourteenth-century vernacular manuscripts of the work

⁷⁹ Inventory evidence places only one copy in one of the great fifteenth-century northern Italian libraries: the Visconti-Sforza library in Milan owned a Latin copy in 1426. Testa, 'Bozza', p. 140. Venice, Correr, Cicogna 2408, also containing a text of Marco Polo, was copied by Filippo di ser Pietro Muleti di Fagagna, a student of rhetoric and public notary at Padua. The colophon (at fol. 46v) is printed by Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 472.

⁸⁰ The translations into French, both made from the Latin (*Recensio Guillelmi*), are the work of Jean le Long of Ypres, monk and then Abbot of St. Bertin and translator of several other travel accounts and texts relating to the East, and Jean de Vignay, Paris Hospitaller and translator of Jacques de Vitry's *Historia hierosolymitanis*. For Jean le Long's translation, see *Les voyages en Asie du bienheureux frère Odoric de Pordenone, religieux de Saint-François*, ed. by Henri Cordier, Recueil de voyages et de documents pour servir à l'histoire de la Géographie depuis le XIII jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle, 20 (Paris: Leroux, 1891). For that of Jean de Vignay, see *Les Merveilles de la terre*

from the Francophone continent feature significantly higher levels of decoration than their Italian counterparts, and are written predominantly in gothic or higher-quality secretary bookhands. This suggests that the French *Relatio* was, rather than being a popular work, considered a deluxe item amongst a wealthy, often lay reading public. Indeed, in several instances, the *Relatio* circulated in the same manuscript as a text of Marco Polo's *Book* of similarly high quality, in the Court French *remainement* (for example, BL, Royal 19.D.I). As can be seen from Tables 2 and 4, the high production values of these manuscripts tend, like those of Marco's *Book* in French, to coincide with a lack of marginal paratext and readerly annotation. Such manuscripts did not, then, invite the scholarship or comment apparently invited by the Latin manuscripts from the same region, but function to hold the reader at a distance, as an observer of the marvellous and splendid.

Latin manuscripts

The surviving manuscript evidence indicates only a low level of diffusion of the Latin recensions of Odorico's *Relatio* in Francophone regions in the fourteenth century. Three manuscripts of these, each of a different recension, survive. One of these, Paris, BN, f. lat. 3195, is an abbreviated version from the turn of the fourteenth century categorised by Chiesa under the general heading of *Brevior* recensions and appears in a scruffily-written manuscript in Dominican ownership by the early sixteenth century. Glasgow, Hunter 458 is a well-produced fourteenth-century manuscript, well laid out in a gothic bookhand, with a well-done but damaged opening initial showing a Franciscan friar offering a book to a king. Both these manuscripts bear the Latin marginal notes in secretary hands consistent with late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century readers.⁸¹

Evidence of monastic or conventual ownership of the work, whether in Latin or French, is remarkably limited, a fact that is perhaps related to a low level of diffusion of the Latin versions of the *Relatio* in this area. Besançon 667.G. is, however a high-quality French-language manuscript of Jean le Long's translation

d'Outremer : Traduction du XIVe siècle du récit de voyage d'Odoric de Pordenone, ed. by D. A. Trotter, Textes Littéraires, 75 (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1990).

⁸¹ The *Relatio* in Hunter 458 also contains a small amount of paratext probably by the volume's corrector, and some nicely-drawn little marginal illustrations of the heads of characters in Odorico's narrative of the Tana martyrdoms, e.g., fol. 110r.

that contains an image of a Premonstratensian engaged in reading.⁸² As this is clearly unrelated to the content of Odorico's narrative, it may be surmised that the image relates to the particular manuscript's intended readership.

3.3.2.2 The fifteenth century

French manuscripts

The four surviving fifteenth-century French manuscripts of the *Relatio* for the most part continue the trends set by the fourteenth-century copies. The early fifteenth-century copy of Jean sans Peur, given to the Duc de Berry (Paris, BN, f. fr. 2810), is endowed with numerous magnificent miniatures and clearly intended to function as an object of display. Though less extravagantly-illuminated, the Paris, BN, f. fr. 1380 and Paris, BN, f. fr. 12202 are nevertheless well decorated. Only the former of these bears a small amount of readerly annotation of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. There is, moreover, in the Francophone manuscripts, as with Marco Polo's *Book*, a notable lack of evidence for lower status or owner-copied exemplars in unprofessional hands, the only clear example of such a practice being the passages extracted from Odorico's *Relatio* that were added, in the fifteenth century, as marginal annotations to a relatively low quality copy of *Mandeville's Travels* in Brussels 1160-1163.⁸³

Latin manuscripts

The only manuscript of this class to be copied in the fifteenth century is Saint-Omer 737, a copy of the reworked *recensio Guecelli*. Copied at the monastery of Saint Bertin in Saint Omer, the manuscript is relatively modest production, written on paper in a mixed script with a low level of decoration. The lack of evidence for readership of the Latin *Relatio* in France is remarkable, and to date, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, published inventories have not been able to supply information to contradict the low-level of diffusion suggested by this single surviving copy. Equally, evidence is lacking concerning the *Relatio's* circulation in areas of French influence amongst the mendicant orders of Dominicans and

⁸² *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France: Départements* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie, 1885-), 32 (1897), 402-04.

⁸³ *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, (Bruxelles : H. Lamertin, 1901-) I, no. 7438.

Franciscans, a group that would seem a ready audience for such a work.⁸⁴ Though it is known, moreover, through the *Recensio Henrici* that Odorico's *Relatio* was sent to Avignon in the fourteenth century in an effort to secure his canonisation (see 3.3), a copy of the text cannot definitely be assigned via inventory evidence to the papal library in either the fourteenth or the fifteenth century.⁸⁵

3.3.3 England

3.3.3.1 The fourteenth century

Latin manuscripts

Perhaps the most striking feature of the diffusion pattern of Odorico's *Relatio* in England is that no evidence survives to suggest any diffusion of the work either in French or in English. Moreover, not only are all the surviving manuscripts in Latin, but the majority transmit the same textual version, that of the notary Guecelli, and many bear some remarkable similarities in format and traces of use.⁸⁶ Of the six extant fourteenth-century English manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio*, two derive from the library of Norwich Cathedral priory (London, BL, Royal 14.C.XIII — also containing Marco Polo — and its probable exemplar, Camb., CCC 407), and a third, also a learned, institutional production, derives, it has been suggested, from the library of the Oxford Franciscans (Oxford, Bodl. Lib, Digby 11).⁸⁷ A further Oxford manuscript from the turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century, Oxford, Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, a miscellany of unmatched quires bought separately, as is indicated by the prices in minuscule in the top margin of the first folio of each quire, lacks evidence of its original or early owners. Nevertheless, its contents, which include scholarly treatises on geometry, goliardic poetry, and Walter Map's *De nugis curialium*, indicate that it was likely to have been compiled and read in a university

⁸⁴ In addition to the copy sent to Avignon, Testa is able only to add a copy in the possession of the Benedictine Pierre Boursire (Petrus Berchorius) of Poitiers, who employed it in the production of his *Reductio morale*: Testa, 'Bozza', p. 165.

⁸⁵ Pommerol and Monfrin, 'La Bibliothèque pontificale à Avignon au XIV^e siècle'; Testa, 'Bozza'.

⁸⁶ All the manuscripts discussed are *Guecelli* versions but for Cambridge, G&C 162/83 (*Brevior*), Cambridge, CCC 275 (*Brevior*) and Glasgow, Hunter 84 (*Guillelmi*). The now fragmentary BL, Cotton Otho D.I, too damaged to analyse for this study, was also of the *Guecelli* recension: Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', p. 350.

⁸⁷ Ownership evidence where available is given in Table 2. For Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, a composite manuscript in three parts, of which part 'A' contains Odorico's *Relatio* as its fourth item, see W. D. Macray, *Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogue 9: Digby Manuscripts*, reprinted with notes by R. W.

environment.⁸⁸ Recently-published inventory evidence fills out this picture a little. A ‘quaternus Odorici cum aliis tractatibus’ was bequeathed by the Prior of Evesham, Nicholas of Hereford (1352-1392), to his house in the late fourteenth century.⁸⁹

The distinctive pattern of ownership and peculiar predominance of the *Guecelli* redaction in English manuscripts of Odorico’s *Relatio* in the fourteenth century coincides with an equally distinctive trend in their patterns of paratext and marginal annotation. Five of the six surviving manuscripts of this class feature some form of marginal paratext, ranging from basic text navigation apparatus such as page headers to more detailed and prescriptive scribal notes that suggest and direct readerly responses to the text. Two manuscripts, moreover, contain marginal annotation that is clearly not scribal paratext, indicating that their readers were in the habit, more usual in scholarly circumstances, of adding marginalia to their manuscripts.⁹⁰

The distinctive physical appearance of the English manuscripts of the *Relatio* suggests the text’s circulation in scholarly institutional and conventual environments over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The distinctive pattern of presentation of these manuscripts — particularly those of the *Guecelli* redaction — suggests, moreover, that within these circumstances, the text was read in a way that distinguishes it from the majority of its vernacular and Latin, French and Italian counterparts. The quantity and type of marginal paratext that many of the manuscripts contain raise the possibility that the work was very much viewed as an object of study by its readers. The large majority of surviving manuscripts in this class contain ‘nota bene’ marks and keywords that could be used as text-finders leading the reader to passages of particular interest or note. Tellingly, the long section of Odorico’s *Relatio* in which the story of the martyrdom of four Franciscan friars at Tana is related is, in Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, furnished with a paratextual apparatus that draws the reader’s attention to the aspects of the account that meet specific readerly expectations of hagiographic genres. Thus

Hunt and A. G. Watson (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1999), col. 7. In the Appendices (p. 10) the editors also cite Ker as accepting the ascription to the Oxford Franciscans.

⁸⁸A.G. Rigg, ‘Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (III)’, *Medieval Studies*, 41 (1979), 468-505 (p. 505).

⁸⁹R. Sharpe. et. al., *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 4 (London: British Library and British Academy, 1996), p. 138.

⁹⁰ However, in the case of BL, Arundel 13, the readerly annotation is likely, on palaeographical grounds, to have been added in the fifteenth century.

in these manuscripts, the torments of the friars prior to their martyrdom are noted and enumerated, as are their miracles prior to and at the time of their deaths and, finally, the all-important proofs of sanctity that are their post-mortem miracles.⁹¹

3.3.3.2 The fifteenth century

Latin manuscripts

Compared to six fourteenth-century copies of the work, only three manuscripts of the *Relatio* survive that were copied in fifteenth-century England. Of these, two contain the type of high-quality decoration not seen in fourteenth-century manuscripts of the work. Camb., CCC 275, containing a *Mandeville* and a *Letter of Prester John*, follows the pattern set by the fourteenth-century manuscripts by featuring some scribal marginal paratext directing readers' approaches to the *Relatio*. Its quantity is small, however, and it is far from being the type of diligent and detailed scribal paratext seen in the two Oxford manuscripts discussed above. It is noteworthy, moreover, that of these three manuscripts, two contain high-quality, gilded decoration and the third (London, BL, Harley 562) is written on an expensively-produced fine parchment, indicating perhaps some slight improvement in the perceived status of the work. One manuscript of the fourteenth century, London, BL, Arundel 13, contains a detailed programme of marginal annotation that pays the same attention to the variety of learning opportunities available in the *Relatio* as the paratext authors of Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, carefully annotating, as will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the Tana martyrdoms and a variety of types of information provided in the text.⁹²

⁹¹ The relevant scribal marginalia in Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 reads 'tormentum' (fol. 45v) and '2um tormentum' (fol. 46r) alongside the friars' torments and 'miraculum' alongside their first post-mortem miracle (fol. 47v). That in Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 has 'primum tormentum' and 'secundum tormentum' (fol. 37r) followed by 'primum miraculum', 'secundum miraculum' and 'tertium miraculum' (fols 37r and 37v). Following their deaths, the scribe notes 'De miraculis post mortem illorum' (fol. 38r). Considerable similarities in the scribal paratext of these two manuscripts give rise to the possibility that these are somehow linked, suggesting that scribes may have in each case copied a core of notes from an exemplar, adding to these in places. Such notes include 'Mare mortuum' (Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fol. 40r) and 'de mare mortuo' (Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fol. 50v); 'ydolum qui petit sanguinem 40 virginum' (Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fol. 39r) and 'De ydola que pe[tit] sanguinem 40a virginum' (Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fol. 49r).

⁹² BL, Arundel 13. Its annotation of the Friars' trials (fols. 39v-42v) is more elegant and verbose than that of the earlier manuscripts, but amongst this verbosity the reader nevertheless notes 'miraculum', 'aliud miraculum' and 'tertium miraculum' alongside the post-mortem miracles performed by the martyrs' relics (fol. 42r).

Ownership information relating to these manuscripts once again confirms the scholarly appearance of the physical texts. Cambridge, CCC, 275 was donated to the college by T. Markaunt in 1439 according to a contemporary note now pasted onto its front flyleaf. In addition to the ownership information available for certain surviving manuscripts, inventory evidence indicates that a manuscript of Odorico's itinerary 'de mirabilibus mundi' was bequeathed in the late 1420s to the impressively stocked library of the mixed Bridgettine foundation of Syon Abbey.⁹³

3.4 Conclusion

Broad differences exist in the social, cultural and intellectual composition of the interpretative communities that read eyewitness accounts of Marco and Odorico in the later Middle Ages. We can say with some confidence that, although Marco Polo's *Book* may have originally been intended, by virtue of its use of Franco-Italian, its mode of address and its chivalric treatment of certain themes, to be read as a romance by noble patrons, once translated into other vernaculars and into Latin, and, equally, translated into different social and cultural milieux, its purpose changed and it came to serve very different functions. One late-fourteenth-century Tuscan reader expressed amazement at its contents; another mid-fifteenth-century reader added an attestation of belief.⁹⁴ Once translated into Latin, it could function as a learning tool, sometimes marked up for or annotated by its readers. Only on its translation into French in the surroundings of the noble and royal courts of France and Burgundy, and on its decoration with sets of extravagant miniatures does the work appear to have met with the approving reception of noble and royal readers that was, it seems, desired for it by Rustichello da Pisa in the first instance.

The story of the diffusion of Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio* across Italy, France and England is also one of the evolution of a work to fit new contexts and serve new purposes. Although it began its life circulating in Latin amongst a few interested Franciscans as a testament to the holiness of its travelling subject it quickly metamorphosed and multiplied in Italy and abroad. The *Memoriale toscano*

⁹³ Vincent Gillespie and A. I. Doyle eds., *Syon Abbey with the Libraries of the Carthusians*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 9 (London: British Library and British Academy, 2001), Thomas Breton's Catalogue (Camb., CCC 144), K.8, fo. 111; p. xxxix.

secularised the text considerably, removing entirely Odorico's long and pious digression concerning the martyrdom of his fellows at Tana, whereas the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose* highlights by its very title its status as a wonder-book. Both probably circulated principally amongst the vernacular literate middle classes. In fact, in only one area and social milieu does Odorico's work appear to have met with the reception initially intended for it by his amanuensis and conventual fellows. In England the text was often provided with paratext that presented it as a work meriting the attention of scholars both for its presentation of the situation of the unknown world and the *mores* of its people, and for its spiritually useful presentation of the wonderful work of God functioning through Franciscan intermediaries.

Over time, the reception patterns of certain textual versions changed significantly in some areas. Italy in particular appears to have experienced something of an explosion in the popularity of both these accounts in the earlier through to the later fifteenth century. The most striking area of expansion appears, to judge from the formats of the surviving manuscripts, to have been amongst the lay middle-class, mercantile and administrative readers. However, Marco Polo's *Book* in particular also appears to receive a boost in Latin readership amongst those in higher-status and even humanist circles in the mid-fifteenth century. This last phenomenon, together with two manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* that show some humanist influence in their script, may be related to the publication in 1442 of Niccolò de' Conti's account of Asia in a work by the celebrated humanist papal secretary, Poggio Bracciolini. From an attestation that appears in two manuscripts of Marco's *Book* of Italian origin, we know that at least one fifteenth-century reader of the *Book* approved its contents on the basis of acquaintance with Niccolò de' Conti's account. It seems possible, then, that in Italy at least, approval in Papal and scholarly circles of a travel account of Asia lent a certain scholarly legitimacy to travel accounts previously thought unworthy of merit by such readers.

⁹⁴ The *podestà* of Cerreto Guidi, completing his own vernacular copy of the text in 1392, adds an expression of amazement at the 'cose incredibili' and 'miracholi' it contains: BNC, II.II.61 (transcribed in Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 317).

Chapter 4: Reading Indian Geography in Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio*: The Evidence of Manuscripts

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (1.1.1.4), the later-medieval travel accounts whose reception forms the focus of this study are not in themselves works of geography or of chorography, but are itineraries. The distinction between works of geography and chorography, and travel accounts is not merely stylistic, but also conceptual. The descriptions of the world that circulated contemporaneously with the production of the texts of Marco and Odorico of the types discussed in the Introduction work towards an end that is both conceptually and stylistically different to that of an itinerary. Instead of offering, as do *descriptiones orbis terrarum* and *mappaemundi*, a vision of the *oekumene* or one of its regions as viewed from afar, the itinerary, irrespective of whether or not it is an actual account of a factual journey, presents a first-hand, earthbound and normally personal perspective on an area of space.¹ Following a discussion of the itinerant viewpoint of the major travel accounts in focus here I shall examine what the implications of this are for the presentation of space in these accounts, and for the geographical frames of reference with which they comply, before analysing the presentation and annotation of geographical details in the physical texts.

4.2 Geography and itinerary in the *Book* and the *Relatio*

The spatial representation of India in the travel accounts produced by merchants and missionaries between c. 1300 and 1500 relates closely to their circumstances of production and intended function. Marco Polo's *Book* was, in common with the later descriptions of India of Jordanus Catalani (c. 1328) and Poggio Bracciolini's redaction of the Niccolò de' Conti's description of India (delivered orally c. 1440; published before 1448), constructed using observations made during long periods of

¹ It should be acknowledged here that Leonardo Olschki has called Marco's *Book* a 'treatise of empirical geography': Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia*, p.13. Though I accept Olschki's finding that the *Book* is compiled from a number of different itineraries, its dominant (though not unique) perspective is itinerant and personal and not detached and omniscient.

time spent in at least some of the countries that they describe. The advantage not only of multiple journeys in each region but also of the ability to obtain information from other travellers and navigators enabled these three travellers to work out and to attempt to transmit a more detailed spatial conception of Southern Asia than those of travellers who undertook only a single journey, such as Giovanni da Montecorvino and Odorico da Pordenone. However, whilst it is true that the texts of longer-term travellers in Southern Asia show some spatial conceptualisation of the size of countries through which they travel and their position in relation to neighbouring lands and seas, the presentation of these varies according to the purpose of each work. Jordanus' *Mirabilia descripta*, for example, contains a chapter dedicated specifically to spatial geography, headed 'what follows concerns the extents of lands' as well as, elsewhere in the work, certain fairly detailed astronomical observations.² In keeping with the purpose of his work, which, as mentioned in 2.2.2, is almost certainly a treatise on India intended to persuade the papal curia to take an interest in the conversion of the country, Jordanus attempts to set out a comprehensive picture of Southern Asia. Stylistically, he tends to employ impersonal constructions such as 'In ista India est...', rather than more personal variants that stress his own experience. This same authoritative style of firm statement is, however, used to discuss regions that Jordanus did not personally visit, including for example the island of Java, as much as those in which he spent some considerable time, such as Kerala, which became the location of his bishopric.³ Certain similar stylistic and structural traits emerge, moreover, from an examination of Poggio Bracciolini's redaction of his interview with the long-term traveller in India, Indonesia and Indochina, Niccolò de' Conti. Poggio separates his account, presented in Book IV of his *De varietate fortunae*, into a chronological account of Niccolò's itinerary, a presentation of the geography of the 'three Indies', and a region-by-region ethnographic description of the peoples discussed. Thus this work, whose raw material was clearly extracted from Niccolò with a view to providing information concerning these unfamiliar lands, presents a schematically laid out spatial geography of the East:

² 'Sequitur de terrarum Spatiis'. The chapter places the countries that Jordanus discusses in order, moving broadly from North West to South East, then to the East, often assigning borders to lands, and measuring distances in days of travel: Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, pp. 122-23, p. 117.

³ Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, pp. 116-17.

All India is divided into three parts: one from Persia to the Indus; the second, from the Indus to the Ganges; and the third, beyond the Ganges. This third part exceeds the others by far in riches, civility and elegance, and is equal to us in the lifestyle and in public traditions.⁴

The presentation of geographical information exemplified in Marco Polo's *Book* and in Odorico's *Relatio* differs significantly from that in Jordanus' *Mirabilia descripta*, and Poggio's *India*. Marco Polo's *Book* offers a great deal of information concerning the spatial geography of Southern Asia and the islands of the Indian Ocean as well as concerning the spatial relationship between these areas and other named places in the world. However, this information, though often more exact than that provided by Jordanus, tends to be presented in a personal and experiential way. As an itinerary rather than a geographical treatise, Marco's *Book* in its earliest, Franco-Italian version sets out primarily to tell the reader not what exists in a particular place or where that place is situated, but how the individual traveller reached it and what he found when he did. Thus, the Franco-Italian *Divisament dou monde*, and following this, its vernacular and Latin translations, does not function unproblematically in the objectively geographical way suggested by its title, the 'Description of the World'. In fact, an account that only covers unfamiliar territories beyond the confines of Western Europe, rather than the whole *oekumene*, the *Divisament* is structured as what I shall term an itinerant text. It seeks to take its readers through the regions of the world as travellers, rather than permitting them to survey these as detached observers. Indeed, the *Divisament* is often presented by its narrator as a journey that the narrator and his audience undertake together. Thus, opening his chapter on the 'Sea of Cin' (China sea), the narrator rather conversationally explains that 'I would like to tell you of many islands that are in this Ocean Sea, that <sea> in which we now are'.⁵ Similarly, following the *Book*'s account of Japan, which forms an eastward diversion from the generally westward trajectory of Marco's itinerary from Southern China to Africa via India, both narrator

⁴ 'Indiam omnem in tres divisam partes: unam a Persis ad Indum flumen; ab eo ad Gangem alteram; tertiam ultioem, quae reliquis est opibus, humanitate, lautitia longe praestantior, uita et ciuili consuetudine nobis aequalis'. Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 134. This conception appears to be based on the division of India embodied in Ptolemaic maps circulating at the time Poggio was writing and that incorporated an 'India intra Gangem' and an 'India citra Gangem'. In Poggio's text this conception has, however, been modified in concordance with the dominant twelfth- to fourteenth-century conception of a tripartite India.

⁵ '[...] vos voil conter de maintes ysles que sunt en cest mer osiane, la ou nos sumes ore': *Divisament*, 158, p. 531. For the locations for medieval toponyms see Appendix 2, maps 2 and 3.

and reader rhetorically return to Zayton and take up ‘our’ book again from there.⁶ Thus the narrator’s itinerant subject position results in a similarly itinerant subject position for the *Divisament*’s readers.⁷

Irrespective of the *Divisament*’s itinerant and subjective narrative position, however, the text, probably due to its being a fusion of multiple itineraries, is specific in both its location of places and its terminology for reference to the ‘Indies’ and their islands, a combination of traits that leads Olschki, as mentioned above (note 1), to define the work as a ‘treatise of empirical geography’. The *Divisament* almost always presents directions of travel by sea and by land, and distances, in miles, between places. Thus on the Indian mainland, in what Marco terms Greater India, Comari (Cape Comorin) is identified as ‘a country of India proper from which one can see something of the north star, which we have not seen from the island of Java until this point’.⁸ The following chapter, concerning the kingdom of Eli (Mount Delly), then proceeds to situate Eli in relation to that same point, stating that ‘Eli is a kingdom about 300 miles to the west of Comari’.⁹ The personal presentation of the information concerning Comari implicates the reader in a shared journey, but at the same time provides details that could help the reader to work out a global position for the country. The position of Eli may then be estimated in relation to this.

The *Book*’s presentation of the East, then, merges certain of the stylistic characteristics of itinerary with some of the stylistic and substantive characteristics of geography. This characteristic hybridity is also detectable in the way the work functions in relation to geographical tradition relating to India. The Indies through which the narrator and reader of the *Book* travel are tripartite and designated with the traditional epithets ‘Greater’ (Champa, Vietnam to Mutfli, Tilang), ‘Lesser’ (Coromandel to Kesmacoram, Pakistan) and ‘Middle’ (Abascie, Ethiopia).¹⁰ Reference to the schema of the tripartite Indies shows an awareness on the part of its

⁶ ‘nos retourneron a Çaiton e d’iluec recomenceron encore nostre livre’: *Divisament*, 160, p. 537.

⁷ Phrases such as these are vulnerable to change or excision in later versions, particularly those that seek to condense the text or to render the description more impersonal and authoritative. Pipino’s Latin translation, for example, replaces ‘cest mer osiane, la ou nos sumes ore’ with ‘Mare illud, ubi est insula Çipangu’: *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 8, p. 157.

⁸ ‘[...] Ynde meisme de la quel se poit veoir aucune couse la stoille de tramontaine, la quel noç ne avon veue de l’isle de Java jusque ci’: *Divisament*, 181, p. 580.

⁹ ‘Eli est un roïame ver ponent lo<n>ge de Comari entor IIIc miles’: *Divisament*, 182, p. 581.

¹⁰ Identification of Ethiopia as one of the three Indies is not unusual. See 1.2.2.2.

author or an early redactor of the conventions of geographical practice and nomenclature relating to this region. However, the way in which the *Book* presents its framework for a geographical understanding of the ‘three Indies’ is idiosyncratic. Common geographical practice in the centuries prior to the composition of the *Divisament* was to provide a broad overview of each region discussed, before moving in closer to describe its specifics. Hence Gervase of Tilbury, who also identifies three Indies, first identifies the general location of India as delimited by the Indus, the Caucasus, and the Ocean Sea, then moves on to identify the three Indies (Superior, Inferior, Meridiana) before discussing each of these in turn.¹¹ The *Book*, by contrast, never provides advance geographical overviews of the regions through which it takes its readers. Nor, moreover, does it allude to the traditional tripartite schema as it progresses from Indochina, through the islands of Indonesia, via Sri Lanka, to the Coromandel coast. In fact, the *Divisament*’s full identification of the three Indies only comes towards the end of the third section of the *Book* that throughout its versions almost universally retains the title of the ‘Livre d’Indie’.¹² This geographical excursus appears in the itinerary following Marco’s discussion of Greater and Lesser India, equivalent to a vast tract of the East stretching from Indochina to the equivalent of modern Pakistan, but before his discussion of Middle India, identified with Abyssinia.¹³ At this late stage in the narrative, the *Book* identifies Greater India, which contains thirteen major kingdoms as stretching from Maabar (the Coromandel coast) to Kesmacorán (Kech-Makran) thus comprising most of subcontinental India from the south east to the north west, with its northern and western border roughly corresponding with modern Pakistan. To complement its Greater India, the *Divisament* also at this point identifies a ‘Lesser India’, comprising eight major kingdoms, which stretches from Chamba (Champa, Indochina) to Mutfili (Motupalli, Tilang). Thus this division comprised not only Indochina, but also what is now Bangladesh and some areas to the north west of the Bay of Bengal (Appendix 2, Maps 2 and 3). Thus whilst the *Divisament* relates to

¹¹ Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, II, 3, pp. 182-85.

¹² Although the Franco-Italian *Divisament* is not divided into numbered books, a modification introduced in Francesco Pipino’s Latin translation, the section of the work that comprises the itinerary from Zayton to Aden via Indonesia, Indochina and India, is termed the ‘Livre d’Indie’, a term retained by the text’s later redactors and translators and where necessary employed in this thesis (in English or French) to denote this section of the work: *Divisament*, 158, p. 529.

¹³ *Divisament*, 192, p. 599.

the traditional conception of a tripartite India, this schema does not governs the text's presentation of these regions, but rather is presented following these, almost as an afterthought.

Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio*, like Marco's *Book*, is presented in an itinerary format from an explicitly subjective, itinerant subject position. Unlike Marco's *Book* in its earliest Franco-Italian version, however, the narrator of Odorico's *Relatio* in the earliest surviving redaction, that of Guglielmo da Solagna, does not implicate his audience in his journey. The *Relatio* is instead presented simply as an account, composed primarily in past tenses, of a single, specific, itinerary pursued by Odorico on his journey to Khanbalik via India. The consequences of this fact for the *Relatio*'s narrative format are significant. Odorico's text, unlike Marco's itinerary, narrates, in the first person ('ego Odoricus'), a specific journey and set of experiences. Occasionally, the descriptions given of places are impersonal. Thus the text locates the island of Java close to Sumatra using the impersonal construction 'close to this kingdom is a great island by the name of Java'.¹⁴ Often, however, Odorico inserts himself into the narrative in a way that underlines it as a subjective account bolstered by the authority of personal experience. Thus, in an extreme example of such practice, the text recounts Odorico's own attempts to reprove and change the behaviour of the inhabitants of the unidentified island of Dondin who kill and eat their sick relatives.¹⁵ Whether reportage or fiction, such interventions into the narrative are important stylistic elements that reinforce the ground-level, personal perspective of the itinerary.

The stylistic liveliness that personal narrative interventions give to Odorico's account are, however, balanced out by the text's far less considered and informed chorographical schema. Odorico's text indicates that very little thought has been given to regional geography, to the positions of India and China in relation to the West, or indeed to the direction and distance travelled between points on his itinerary. Such consistent vagueness indicates that the friar and his amanuensis had little prior cosmological or geographical context within which to place his journey.

¹⁴ 'Penes hoc regnum est una magna insula nomine Iava': *SF*, I, 13, 446.

¹⁵ *SF*, I, 18, 456-57.

As a passenger unlikely to make the journey again, it would have been unnecessary for Odorico to always take note of the details of the journey such as the direction or distance of travel between ports of call. Thus Odorico's indications of direction of travel can be intermittent, omitted, for example, from his chapters on Minabar (Malabar) and Mobar (Coromandel Coast).¹⁶ Similarly, no doubt because he arrived at many mainland ports by sea, Odorico's text sometimes refers erroneously to mainland locations as islands.¹⁷

The empirical basis of Odorico's geographical conceptions has ramifications for the presentation of regional divisions and borders in the *Relatio*, and specifically for those relating to the Indies. In his chapter on Chaldea, Odorico narrates passing through 'Inland India' ('India quae est infra terram'), an otherwise unheard-of territorial division.¹⁸ He then notes departing from this 'Inland India', travelling to Hormuz, and thence to Tana, situated on the Island of Salsette near Bombay. At no stage after Odorico's departure from Inland India does Guglielmo da Solagna's earliest version of Odorico's text signal to its readers that the missionary at some point crossed into another, different, India. From the text alone, then, it is not explicit that Odorico situates Tana in India at all, let alone in which of the possible tripartite or bipartite Indies he places it. From the text's assertion that King Porus, Alexander's vanquished Indian foe in the *Historia de preliis* and many other medieval historical and legendary texts, engaged in battle with the conqueror there, it is clear that Odorico intends Tana and all places that follow it to be understood as pertaining to India until the text states otherwise.¹⁹ Thus rather than being a defined country with a fixed western border, India is here identified by association. Indeed, Odorico's identification of this region by name is retrospective. Readers are

¹⁶ *SF*, I, 19, 439; 10, 442.

¹⁷ Such as Polumbum (Quilon): *SF*, I, 10, 441.

¹⁸ *SF*, I, 7, 422. Yule suggests that this name, which he translates as 'Inland India', derives from a long-standing tradition of referring to the district around the lower Euphrates as 'Hind': *Cathay*, II, 111n.

¹⁹ *SF*, I, 7, 422-23. The *Memoriale toscano* version of the text is the only version that indicates a transition between the Middle East and India at this point, calling Hormuz the 'incominciamento dell'India': *Memoriale toscano*, p. 99. The belief that Hormuz marked the boundary of India may derive from Het'um's *Flos historiarum terre Orientis*, which explains that anyone wishing to travel to India must go via 'Hermes' (Hormuz). The *Flos historiarum* is edited in its original French and the Latin translation of Nicolas Falcon by C. Kohler in *Recueil des Histoires des Croisades: Documents Arméniens*, 2 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale 1869-1906), II, 111-253; 254-363 (p. 266). 'Ormes' is also identified as 'primus portus Indie' in the letter of Bartholomeus of Tabriz to the Vicar General of the minister of the Franciscans in the East: Jordanus, *Mirabilia descripta*, p. 23.

explicitly told that the text has discussed India at all only at the point at which Odorico's itinerary leaves it in order to move on to Southern China ('India Superior' or Manzi), at which point the text ends its discussion of the region, termed only 'hec India' with a brief, confusing and sometimes corrupted summary of its islands and kingdoms.²⁰

Items of geographical information and observations indicative of spatial awareness are few in Odorico's *Relatio* by comparison with Marco's *Book*. The *Relatio*'s itinerary through India and the Indian Ocean contains, for example, only a single reference to the position of the Pole Star, crucial for navigators, whose position is mentioned on several occasions by Marco and Jordanus. Odorico's identification of the point on his itinerary at which it becomes impossible to see the North Star (Sumatra) is worded in a manner that indicates an unusually personal perspective on astronomical observation: he writes that at Lamori he began 'to lose the Pole Star, because the land had taken it from me'.²¹ This short passage makes it plain that the itinerant point of view of the narrator is a way of thinking that is fundamentally in opposition to the impersonal, distant depictions of whole or part that are to be found in geographical or chorographical works. In the personal itinerary, astronomical observation is presented as personal experience and is not converted into cosmological data. The disappearance of the star is not interpreted to provide spatial information, but rather is seen only through the reflective mirror of the subject position of the traveller. Odorico, his amanuensis, early editors and translators appear to lack the wider cosmographical knowledge and understanding necessary to attempt objective geographical description.²²

Whilst the *Divisament* appears, then, to be based on a clear conception of the East and of the place of the tripartite Indies within it, Odorico's hazier presentation of his geographical information appears related to a more confused geographical conception of the regions through which he travelled. In both cases, however, the

²⁰ In Guglielmo da Solagna's redaction it reads 'De hac insula requisivi multos qui hoc sciunt, et omnes uno ore locuntur et dicunt, quod hec India bene viginti quatuor millia insularum continet sub se, in qua etiam bene sunt LXIIIor Reges corone. Maior pars insule huius bene ab hominibus habitatur': *SF*, I, 18, 457.

²¹ '[...] inepi amittere tramontanam, cum terra michi acceperat eam': *SF*, I, 12, 445.

²² The passage is removed in the reworked *Recensio Guecelli*: *PN*, IV, 385-86. In most vernacular versions it is retained in the first person: see Jean le Long's translation, *Les Voyages en Asie*, 12, p. 135 and *Libro delle nuove*, 20, p. 155.

texts do not present at the opening of their itineraries through the Indies a clear framework within which these may be understood. Instead, both texts refer incidentally and, in the case of the *Relatio*, inconsistently, to wider geographical frameworks and nomenclatures concerning which, as was outlined in 1.2, there was little contemporary consensus. The combination of the lack of a geographical consensus common to both reader and narrator and an itinerant point of view — which, in the case of the *Divisament*, intentionally encompasses both narrator and audience — has significant narrative consequences. Narrator and reader travel together through unfamiliar lands, and the reader is expected to discover the geography of these regions as they unfold and through the itinerant point of view of the narrator.²³

4.3 Analysis of the presentation and annotation of geographical information

I have analysed and categorised a sample of approximately half the extant relevant manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* in Tables 5 and 6 (Appendix 3) based on their paratexts' presentation of the geographical information provided by or alluded to in the texts and on the patterns of readers' marginalia noting these details.²⁴ For this purpose, my working definition of the term 'geographical' has been broad. It encompasses three main types of information, the first of which is related to the types of geographical writing discussed earlier (1.2.1), whilst the remaining two relate more closely to the experience of travel. Firstly, I have noted cosmological paratext or annotations linking the text to an extra-textual geographical schema. In practice, this is generally the schema of a tripartite India; traditional oceanography; biblical or Christian geography. Secondly, I have noted toponymic paratext or annotations associated with any unfamiliar geographical nomenclature provided by the text. In practice, this is generally a gloss of place names. Thirdly, I have drawn out paratext or notes that show an awareness of spatial geography such as directions, size of places, distances between places. This includes observations on latitude using the pole star.

²³ A certain stylistic similarity to the presentation of space in travel in romance and epic genres is to be noted here. For trends in such presentation in two French texts, see Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, *Les Romans d'Alexandre: Aux frontières de l'épique et du romanesque* (Paris: Champion, 1998), pp. 239-47.

²⁴ For full details of the sample and an explanation of the terminology employed, see Appendix 3.2.

The sections of the manuscripts examined in detail for this chapter are those that present the texts' itineraries through India and the islands that, according to the travellers' own schemas, belong conceptually and imaginatively to India. This has not been a simple matter to determine, however, because, as I have outlined above, the travellers' conceptions of the Indies are not identical. Marco's 'Livre de Indie' rehearses an itinerary from the port of Zayton (Chü'an-chou) in Southern China, via Japan and India to Zanzibar, but his India the Less stretches from Champa (Indochina) to Mutfili (Tilang); his India the Greater from Maabar (Arab geographers' Ma'bar; Coromandel) to Kesmacoran (western Pakistan); his 'Meçane India' (cautiously interpreted by Francesco Pipino as meaning 'Middle or Southern India') with Abyssinia.²⁵ However, this schema leaves the status of the many islands discussed ambiguous. There are 12700 of them in the Sea of India, certainly including Indonesia, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Sri Lanka. They are presented as belonging conceptually to India, but to which of the three Indies is not stated.²⁶ Odorico's conception of India is yet more problematic. Whilst the *Relatio* identifies an area of what is now Iraq as 'Inland India' ('India quae est infra terram'), it does not, as outlined above, identify a bordered 'India' proper. According to the *Memoriale toscano*, 'Ormes' (Hormuz) is the 'start' ('incominciamento') of India, providing some form of western border.²⁷ Towards the east, a conceptual break between 'this India' ('ista India': there is no further precision in the original recension) and 'India superior' is placed between Indonesia and Manzi (Southern China). Thus Odorico's 'India' appears to comprise Hormuz, subcontinental India, Sri Lanka, the Andamans and Nicobars, Indonesia and Indochina and, indeed, a full 24,000 islands, containing sixty-four crowned kings.²⁸

The section of manuscripts of Marco's *Book* analysed in detail, then, correspond with Marco's 'Livre de Indie', in which is presented his itinerary from Manzi (Southern China) to Zanzibar, which runs through Greater and Lesser India, as he conceives of them, but does not include his 'Middle India (Abyssinia).²⁹ In the

²⁵ *Divisament*, 192, p. 598; 'medie seu meridiane yndie': *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 44, p. 189.

²⁶ *Divisament*, 192, p. 598.

²⁷ *Memoriale Toscano*, p. 99.

²⁸ *SF*, I, 18, 457.

²⁹ It should be noted that the 'Livre de Indie' does not describe only lands designated part of the 'three Indies' by Marco. Examining the whole of the 'Livre de Indie' therefore makes it possible to

case of Odorico's *Relatio*, the section analysed begins with the text's first reference to 'India' ('Inland India'), and ends with the itinerary's transition to Manzi. It consequently corresponds with the friar's conception of 'Inland India' and his unspecified 'ista India', but not with his 'India superior'.³⁰ Thus, although the nomenclatures employed to refer to the regions discussed and their divisions differ, the 'Indies' examined in both texts overlap with one another sufficiently to allow direct comparison to be possible and fruitful.

4.3.1 Marco Polo's *Book*

4.3.1.1 The Italian States

The Franco-Italian *Divisament dou Monde*, the earliest surviving version of Marco Polo's *Book* (F; sole manuscript: Paris, BN, f. fr. 1116) divides the chapters which fall within its 'livre de Indie' (the 'Book of India') according to the principle of place. With few exceptions, each new island or region within the Book of India normally receives its own dedicated chapter. The chapter divisions in this version, moreover, generally show a hierarchical understanding of the categories of places described. Thus the island of Java the Less ('Java la Menor', Sumatra) is treated in a single chapter that includes a brief account of the island as a whole, then an account of each of its multiple kingdoms.³¹ This method of dividing the texts into chapters on a basic geographical principle is retained by some later versions of the *Book*, but is modified or lost altogether in others. In Francesco Pipino's translation, the single most widely-diffused version of the *Book* both within and outside Italy, this principle is modified, largely in the direction of greater specificity. Thus in Pipino's translation the single long chapter concerning Java the Less is divided into a chapter-

determine how well-contextualised and well-distinguished for readers the 'three Indies' are. It should be noted here that on an earlier itinerary through Central Asia, Marco also describes the provinces of 'Bangala' (Bengal), 'Chesimur' (Kashmir) and 'Dalivar' (Lahore). At Kashmir, which Marco identifies as being at the northern border of 'Yndie', however, Marco's itinerary turns away 'because if we were to go further, we would enter into India, and I do not want to enter there at this point, because on the return part of our trip, I will tell you everything about India in order' ('por ce que se nos alaisomes avant nos entronmes en Yndie et je ne i voil entrer ore a cestui point, por ce que au retorer de nostre voie vos conteron toutes les couses d'Ynde por ordre': *Divisament*, 49 (p. 363). I have decided not to include an examination of these (short) sections of the work in this chapter for reasons of practicability and space, but nevertheless wish to highlight here that, in the manuscripts examined in person, I have in no case seen evidence of a link drawn by a paratext-author or reader between these provinces located in or bordering northern India and the southern Indian provinces that Marco describes in detail.

³⁰ *SF*, I, 7-18, 421-57.

by-chapter description of its constituent kingdoms.³² Similarly, Pipino also divides up his sources' long chapters on Maabar, by the simple expedient of inventing an extra province, 'Var', to which certain customs are then attributed.³³ Pipino's apparently regular schematic division of the text, however, though treating it as a work of chorography, does not attempt to tie the work into a broader geographical schema. His chapter headers do not, for example, make a consistent effort to draw attention to divisions between the three Indies, even when they introduce sections of text in which Marco identifies or discusses these.³⁴

The Italian vernacular manuscripts of the *Book*, when they divide and rubricate the text, sometimes do so on principles very different to those of Pipino. The chapter headers of one sub-group of manuscripts of the earliest fourteenth-century Tuscan translation (TA) seek to help the reader to contextualise the text by introducing the concept of the three Indies into the rubric that opens Marco's 'livre de Indie'. Thus in Florence, BNC, II.II.61 the opening rubric to the Book of India in fact introduces its readers to 'le .iii. indie' ('the three Indies'), a clarification that both ties Marco's *Book* into the traditional schema of a tripartite India and anticipates the belated geographical excursus identifying the three Indies that occurs towards the end of the Book of India.³⁵

The marginal paratexts of some Italian vernacular manuscripts, however, indicate that their authors often experienced confusion when faced with the problem of interpreting Marco's geographical schema. An early fifteenth-century manuscript of the main Venetian translation (VA; Florence, Riccardiana, 1924) features a rubricated page header above the transition passage between the *Book*'s account of Manzi (Southern China) and the beginning of the 'Book of India' that reads 'Greater

³¹ *Divisament*, 166, p. 542.

³² It is noteworthy that these modifications do not appear in the Venetian version of the *Book*, which indicates that it was Pipino's own innovation: *Marka Pavlova*, 3, 13-19, pp. 160-65; *Il Milione Veneto*, 27-33, pp. 225-27.

³³ 'Var' arises from a misunderstanding of the name of the king of the most important province of Maabar. The name, Sender Bandi Devar in the *Divisament* (F), is misunderstood by later redactors as employing a locative element (thus it becomes 'Senderban re de Var' in the main Tuscan version). Francesco Pipino appears to be the first redactor to describe the province of 'Var' that evolves in this way: *Divisament*, 174, p. 552; *Milione*, 170, p. 235; *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 33, pp. 169-171.

³⁴ The rubric that introduces Marco's section, towards the end of Book 3, in which the three Indies are identified and explained (termed his 'geographical excursus' in 4.2) simply reads 'De provincia abascie' (Concerning the province of Abyssinia): *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 43, p. 188.

India [.] He says no more concerning these countries. But he wishes to speak concerning the marvels of Greater India'.³⁶ This rubric appears at the point where the text begins to discuss, according to Marco's terminology, 'India Menore' (India the Less: that is, from Indochina to West of Bengal) rather than the Greater India (that is, mainland India) that the rubric signals. Positioning such an incorrect summary at this point, furthermore, leaves the rubricator with little option for introducing Marco's transition between Greater India ('India mayore') and Middle India (Abyssinia) later in the text. When this point, the rubricator simply makes the redundant note 'he no longer wishes to speak of these regions'.³⁷ Thus rather than aiding readers' grasp of Marco's text, the interventions of the paratext-author of Riccardiana 1924 transmit a fundamentally misleading reading of Marco's Indian geography.

Another of the many Italian vernacular versions contains, when rubricated, chapter headers that present the text's geographical information as of minimal importance. Ashburnham 534 and Florence, BNC, Magl. XIII.73, which transmit a later Tuscan text (TB; a version not always divided into rubricated chapters), divide and rubricate their texts not with reference to geographical divisions and categories such as kingdoms, provinces or islands, but largely with reference to the marvels and the exotic customs of the peoples there described. Thus the rubric for the island of Seilan (Sri Lanka) omits identification of the island under discussion, instead telling its readers, via a single loosely paratactic sentence, of the island king's legendary ruby, of the nudity of the islanders, their use of wine from trees and certain of their products, as well as throwing in the interpolation that they eat human flesh.³⁸

If we accept that rubrics such as those to Ashburnham 534 and BNC, Magl. XIII.73 functioned as reading direction and finding aids, the implication of their form and content is that their readers were expected to employ them in order to

³⁵ 'Qui comincia messire marco polo anarrare molte cose maraviglose dellindia cioe delle .iii. indie': fol. 32r.

³⁶ 'India mazore non conta plu deqele contrate[.] Ma vol contar dele meraveye dindia mayore'. I interpret this as needing punctuation between 'India mazore' and 'non conta plu', but there is none in the manuscript. The 'y' of 'mayore' features an apparent contraction mark above that I have not been able to rationalise. Elsewhere (e.g., fol. 44v), the main text of this manuscript employs 'mayore', perhaps accounting for the paratext-author's orthographic uncertainty and variety: fol. 37r.

³⁷ 'non plu vol dire di quele contrate': fol. 44v.

³⁸ 'Dunbello Rubino chea il re e vanno tucti ingnudi e mangiano charne umana e fano vino dalberi e acci Rubini e zaffiri e topazi': BNC, Magl. XIII.73, fol. 27r. This rubric with minor variants appears in another manuscript of the same version, Ashburnham 534, at fol. 22v.

locate marvellous and strange elements in the text without reference to the geographical locations of these, to the text's spatial dimension, or to political geography. The rubrics present the text as an account of powerful rulers, marvellous palaces, strange peoples who eat human flesh and observe strange customs, and marvellous wealth and spices. The omission of references to toponyms and to directions and distances in the rubrics adds, furthermore, to this impression of a narrative subject moving from place to often nameless place, confronting a catalogue of strange and marvellous peoples and creatures. Thus, although geographical information concerning the three Indies is presented in these texts, the paratext ensures that it is subsumed among the text's marvels.

Programmes of marginal paratext functioning as aids to reading occur in six of the manuscripts of Italian origin examined for this thesis (Appendix 3, table 5) but of these, only three (all vernacular productions, of which Riccardiana 1924 has been discussed above) contain evidence of comprehension or use of the geographical information provided in the 'livre de Indie'. The short summaries added by the scribe to the margins of the fourteenth-century Tuscan manuscript, Florence, BNC, II.IV.136 include references to the height of the Pole Star (fol. 47r) and an indication of the text's transition to Middle India ('L'India Mezzana', i.e. Abyssinia: fol. 57v). The fifteenth-century Latin text in BAV, Barb. lat. 2687 contains, however, a fairly extensive programme of scribal marginal annotation that highlights place names, identifies Maabar with 'maior India', notes the number of islands in the Sea of India and, showing an ability to cross-refer to classical sources, glosses the mythical Island of Women that Marco places under the dominion of Socotra as the Kingdom of the Amazons (fols 46r, 47v, 47r).

Though many vernacular Italian manuscripts contain marginal traces of reading, as Table 5 shows these tend to be sparse and pay little attention to the text's geographical detail. Four personally-examined Latin manuscripts in this annotated category, however contain readerly notes with some geographical interest. Sustained interest of this type is, however, very rare, and tends to occur in the fifteenth century. In the fourteenth-century manuscript BN, f. lat. 3195, a freehand that probably dates to the later fifteenth century adds a series of readerly notes to a manuscript already provided with a limited programme of fourteenth-century marginal scribal

paratext.³⁹ Whereas the fourteenth-century scribal notes add very little in total to Pipino's third book (Pipino's translation's equivalent of the 'livre de Indie'), the later notes construct a lively and engaged response to the main text, sometimes in language independent of it.⁴⁰ Thus the annotator notes not only the number of islands in the Indian ocean and the reputed great size of Java (fol. 53v), but also annotates the political status of the islands and provinces discussed, by marking 'libera' alongside those that the text identifies as paying tribute to no-one.⁴¹ This apparent interest in political geography is persistent and manifests itself again alongside Marco's chapter on the island of Socotra, where the annotator remarks that 'this island has no overlord except for a bishop'.⁴² Much of what this astute fifteenth-century reader pulls out of the text, then, would indicate a bias toward political geography rather than an interest in the measurement of the earth, distances and boundaries.

In one instance, the later fifteenth-century annotator of BN, f. lat. 3195 introduces an innovation into his marginal annotation that may indicate the influence of the traditional legendary geography of India on his interpretation of Marco's text. The annotator identifies, in a marginal note, the mainland province of Lar (near Gujarāt) as an island. The main text on Lar identifies this northerly, mainland province as the place from which all the Brahmans of India, who live lives of commendable honesty and chastity, originate. The marginal annotation at this point reads that 'Lar is an island in which the people do not lie'.⁴³ Here the annotator, whose notes are usually scrupulously correct, appears to have amended Marco's text in order to reconcile it with the tradition represented in some versions of the Alexander legends, according to which the Brahmans inhabit an island.⁴⁴ Thus

³⁹ The later notes are in a freehand hand featuring some flourishing and an occasional slight tilt to the right. The earlier annotation, identified here as probably part of the production process, may also have been carried out in two phases, to judge from certain differences in spacing and ductus.

⁴⁰ The scribal hand adds only sparse notes to the account of the Tartar wars at the end of Book 3 (fol. 61v). An additional late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century italic hand also makes some notes in this manuscript of the *Book* (e.g., fols. 29r-30v), but not in Book 3.

⁴¹ For example: alongside the province of Locac (fol. 53v); alongside the island of Silam (Seillan, fol. 54v); alongside Java (fol. 53v).

⁴² 'non habet ynsula illa dominum nisi episcopum': fol. 57v.

⁴³ 'Lar insula est in qua homines non mentiuntur'. The main text here has Lar as a 'provincia': fol. 56v.

⁴⁴ The Middle English *Wars of Alexander* situates the 'Bragmeyns' on an island in the Ganges: *The Wars of Alexander*, ed. Duggan and Turville-Petre, p. 138. The Brahmans are also placed on an island

Marco's empirical authority is overruled, and a tract of land that he has identified as a *provincia* is rewritten as an *insula* on legendary authority.

The most exceptional programme of analytical marginal readerly annotation found in the Italian manuscripts examined is that added in a humanistic-influenced cursive probably of the late fifteenth century to the margins of BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641. The annotator uses his marginalia to make extensive reference to the geographical information that Marco's text provides. Thus the geographical marginalia in this manuscript range from running headers placed in the otherwise blank top margin, indicating the name of a place discussed (e.g., 'Java minor' at fol. 91r), to notes concerning political geography, such as 'Java the Less has eight kingdoms'.⁴⁵ Against the text's reference to Maabar the annotator notes that it is '[on the] mainland and is in Greater India', and alongside the chapter in which Pipino identifies and sets out the extent of each of the three Indies, the annotator places the helpful finding notes 'India maior', 'India minor', 'India media' and 'Abascia', indicating careful attention to Marco's schematic division of the Indies.⁴⁶ Particularly noteworthy, finally, is this annotator's persistent and careful annotation of Marco's mentions of the elevation of the Pole Star.⁴⁷ The unusual later fifteenth-century Italian reader of BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641, then, employs the tool of readerly annotation to transform Marco's *Book*, using running headers and marginal notes, into a scholarly, functional work, useful for personal geographical reference.

4.3.1.2 The Francophone continent

The surviving evidence indicates that the primary means of the *Book*'s circulation in France was via the French-language version that tends to appear in high-quality, often illuminated, copies whose rubrics largely follow the Franco-Italian *Divisament* in format, dividing the text on the principle of place, according to the itinerary's

in *Mandeville's Travels*: Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre des merveilles du monde*, ed. by Christiane Deluz, Sources d'histoire médiévale, 31 (Paris: CNRS, 2000), p. 456 (henceforth *LdMdM*).

⁴⁵ 'Jana [*sic*] minor habet octo regn[os]': fol. 90v.

⁴⁶ 'maabar terra firma et est in India maior': fol. 93v. The three Indies noted at fol. 108r.

⁴⁷ For example, at Jana minor he notes 'non videtur polus articus': fol. 90v. At Comari he notes 'non videtur polus' followed by bracketing of 'unus cubiti' alongside Marco's comment that the Pole Star can be seen at this height from a position of thirty miles out to sea from Comari: fol. 102r.

ports of call.⁴⁸ The sole possible exception to this pattern is the earlier fourteenth-century possibly Avignonese manuscript, BL, Add. 19513 (3.2.21). The copy of Marco's *Book*, unfortunately now incomplete,⁴⁹ bears some readerly marginalia of geographical significance that probably also dates from the fourteenth century, as well as later marginalia in at least three other hands. The same volume contains the single surviving copy of Jordanus Catalani's *Mirabilia descripta*. The early annotations of items of geographical interest are, however, few and function more in the manner of visual finding aids than analysis or commentary. The annotator notes details such as the number of islands in the Sea of Cin (fol. 131r), also picking out the size of Java (fol. 131v) with marginal bracketing.⁵⁰ The main text's references to the Pole Star, moreover, attract the addition of a small star in the margin (fol. 132r; fol. 132v). These annotations are informative concerning the way in which this particular manuscript may have been read. The symbolic rather than written nature of many of its finding aids indicates that the manuscript was marked up by a reader for his own ease of reference and use, as the visual rather than verbal scheme would not necessarily have been easily interpreted by another user. The use of symbols, numbers and one-word notes indicates the unidirectional flow of information in this case between the text and its reader. Whereas analysis requires the written word, simple memorization or learning can be aided by the use of symbols. Finally, the limited number of specifically geographical finding aids by comparison with those indicating references to jewels, gold and exotic customs, indicates a lack of priority in the attention to such details.⁵¹

⁴⁸ They tend only to add the information that particular places are islands or *terra firma*, but such rubrics alongside illustrations may be functioning in part as instructions to illuminators. See Dutschke, 'The Truth in the Book', 289-90.

⁴⁹ The text ends at 3: 27. See *Marka Pavlova*, p. 163.

⁵⁰ Gadrat notes four marginal hands working in the volume: 'Jordan Catala', p. 271. Jordanus' *Mirabilia descripta* is the most heavily annotated text by every hand. Dutschke notes one main marginal hand, which she suggests is of the fourteenth century, raising the possibility that the volume may have been commissioned for this annotating reader: 'Francesco Pipino', p. 668. Although there are indeed multiple annotating hands in the margins, one early hand that uses many symbols in conjunction with occasional written notes dominates.

⁵¹ References to wealth and jewels are annotated in BL, Add. 19513 both in the *Mirabilia descripta* and Marco's *Book* with a small diamond symbol. This occurs alongside a reference to gold in Japan at fol. 129v, and alongside a reference to gold in Locac at fol. 131v. It is noteworthy however that the *Mirabilia descripta* in the same manuscript contains a cross-reference to Marco Polo's discussion of Seillan in the hand of one of the manuscript's later annotators: 6r.

High-status, often illuminated Court French manuscripts are, however, never provided with marginal paratext, and only rarely with readers' marginalia. The single example of such a manuscript that shows traces of being read for its geographical information is Stockholm M 304, a fourteenth-century French manuscript annotated in Latin in a fifteenth-century hand. These annotations are very unusual in their bias towards geographical details.⁵² In particular, the annotator draws out references to the encircling Ocean Sea, which he notes consistently throughout the text (e.g. fol. 71r). Exceptionally, this particular annotator also highlights with a marginal note the western border of India. Alongside Quesmacuram (Kesmacoran; Kech-Makran), the annotator writes 'note that this kingdom is the last [Kingdom] of India'.⁵³ It is significant, I believe, that the scholarly fifteenth-century hand that draws geographical information in Latin out of this vernacular manuscript is considerably later than the date of the manuscript's production. Only upon moving out of its original, courtly context and into the hands of a scholar with, to judge from the cosmological data and outline world map in his hand on the codex's final folio, an interest in cosmography, is this courtly, entertaining text transformed by marginalia into a work that can be used for geographical reference.

4.3.1.3 England

English manuscripts of the *Book* are primarily of Pipino's Latin version and thus contain his usual divisions and headers and, usually, full chapter lists. The three exceptions to this rule are in fact abbreviated versions of Pipino's Latin. The texts that appear in the large, institutional, historical volumes that are Camb., CUL, Dd. 8.7 (containing a Polychronicon and continuation of John of Tynemouth's *Historia aurea*) and embedded within manuscripts of John of Tynemouth's Chronicle itself (Lambeth 12 and Camb., CCC 5), are abbreviated texts that compress and simplify the geographical divisions detailed in the usual rubrics and text into a few general chapters, such as for example 'Item de regnis Indie' and 'Item de regionibus Indie', which cover mainland India (CUL, Dd. 8.7, fol.5r-v). In the annotated manuscripts, as Table 5 shows, the pattern already established of infrequent or inconsistent interest in geographical details continues to dominate the surviving manuscript

⁵² This manuscript was viewed in the facsimile: *Le livre de Marco Polo*, ed. by Nordenskiöld.

⁵³ 'nota hoc regnum esse ultimum Indie': fol. 86v.

evidence, with none of the manuscripts that bear marginal paratext featuring marginalia categorised here as geographical.

Only one English manuscript contains readerly marginal annotations that show the text consistently acting as a repository of geographical information. In the highly unusual manuscript BL, Arundel 13, which features annotation in two hands, the earlier annotator, probably of the fourteenth century, initiates a pattern of annotation of matters of geographical significance that is continued by the later, probably of the fifteenth. The earlier annotator remarks, for example, upon the number of islands in the Sea of Cin, the length of the journey between Manzi and Çipangu, and cross-references mentions of the Pole Star (e.g. fol. 30r). The later annotator then completes this schema of annotation, writing, for example, alongside the main text's reference to the re-appearance of the arctic pole at a point close to Cape Cormorin that 'from the island of Java until this place the North Star is not visible'.⁵⁴ Thus, although both annotators manipulate the manuscript in a manner that clearly implies its use for reference, employing cross-references both within texts and, as will be seen in Chapter 5, between Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio*, neither annotator shows great interest in geographically analysing the text, whether by delimiting the tripartite Indies or by otherwise linking to an extra-textual geographical framework.

4.3.2 Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio*

Like Marco's *Book*, Odorico's *Relatio* survives in a variety of manuscript versions, many of which are rubricated differently from one another, and some of which circulate without rubrics or chapter divisions of any kind. Unlike Marco Polo's *Book*, however, the transmission history of the *Relatio* is not dominated by a single Latin translation in the way that Pipino's translation dominates the transmission of Marco's *Book*. As a result, the manuscript tradition of Odorico's work is very diverse, as is the presentation of the work via its varying rubrics and paratexts.

4.3.2.1 The Italian States

A glance at Table six shows that three of the five manuscripts of Italian origin examined here that employ chapter divisions divide their texts on geographical principles, irrespective of the language or manuscript version of the text they

⁵⁴ 'Ab insula Iana [*sic*] [*u*]sque hic, polus articus non videtur': fol. 33r.

contain. For example, one set of chapter headings that circulates with certain texts of the *Guillelmi* redaction divides the text on the principle of place, but in each case adds one or more attributes of the place discussed to the rubric, with the result that the chapter headers function as summaries of the information to follow. In this way Malabar is linked to the production of pepper, and Polubum (Quilon) to reverence of the ox.⁵⁵ Thus whilst the paratext-author here documents the places discussed on Odorico's itinerary meticulously, each such place is identified as the *locus* of a marvellous or extraordinary feature. The rubrics function toponymically, but do not help the reader to assimilate or understand information about the wider region. They neither note boundaries between regions, nor draw geographical inferences such as the identity of the three Indies, from the material.

The sole rubricated fourteenth-century exemplar that does not divide its text on geographical principles, the clearly institutional production in BN, f. lat. 2584, is divided only into a few, long chapters. However, it features in compensation a good deal of scribal marginalia that keeps track of the itinerary's progression from place to place. Like the rubrics of Casanatense 276 given above, its scribal paratext links most points on its itinerary to a key characteristic feature: ginger and reverence for cattle in Polubum (fol. 120v) and the body of St. Thomas in Maabar (fol. 121r). However, the marginal paratext of BN, f. lat. 2584, like the rubrics of Casanatense 276, passes in silence over the itinerary's transition into India, although the annotator does place a noting sign alongside the narrator's boundary statement after his account of Indochina and Indonesia ('here I finish with this India') and subsequent transition to India Superior or Manzi.⁵⁶

The chapter headings of the rubricated manuscripts of the fourteenth-century Italian vernacular version of the *Relatio* entitled *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose* identify cities, regions and kingdoms visited on Odorico's itinerary and add summaries of key characteristics for each place to these, as do the

⁵⁵ Ch. 9: 'De nemore minibar ubi nascitur piper et quomodo'; Ch. 10: 'De civitate pabulo ubi bos pro deo adoratur; de cuius orina. Rex et regina illius terre omni mane cum exit de stabulo lavant facies suas, et de eius stercore sibi pectore ungentes': Casanatense 276, fol. 90r.

⁵⁶ 'hic ipsius Indie facio finem': fol. 122v.

rubrics of Casanatense, 276 and the marginal paratext of BN, f. lat. 2584.⁵⁷ It is not surprising given the title under which this work circulated that the majority of key features thus picked out are unfamiliar and marvellous things. Concern to link place names with memorable and wonderful features, however, does not prevent the rubrics of this version from sometimes providing geographical information that links Odorico's *Relatio* to an extra-textual geographical schema. In one manuscript of this version (Vatican, BAV, Urb. lat. 1013), the *Libro*'s transition from Chaldea to 'India infra terram' is noted in a rubric that reads 'Concerning India and concerning the Ocean Sea that encircles the land'.⁵⁸ This rubric informs the text's readers explicitly, as the main text at this point does not, that Odorico's Ocean Sea is the same Ocean Sea that surrounds the *oekumene* in the Macrobian world view and that is represented as encircling the *terra firma* on *mappaemundi*. This pattern of greater specificity and geographical contextualisation is continued in several further rubrics relating to Odorico's Indies. The rubric that introduces Tana states explicitly, as the text and its Latin source do not, that the Tana here discussed is 'la tana dindia', quite possibly in order to distinguish the Tana 'of India' from the Tana (Azov) on the Black Sea that was well-known through Franciscan and Dominican missionaries and their texts in the fourteenth century.⁵⁹

The rubrics to the *Libro delle nuove* appear, in one place, moreover, to suggest a redactor's frustrations with the lack of clear geographical information concerning Odorico's Indies that the text provides. The rubrics identify islands *en route* between the Indian mainland and India Superior (Manzi) as pertaining to 'la seconda India', a term that appears neither in the text of the *Libro* nor in the Latin versions of the *Relatio*.⁶⁰ The rubric's use of the term, then, attempts to reclassify the places discussed in the *Libro* using a term from one of the standard later-medieval geographical schemas for understanding the East. However, given that the term

⁵⁷ For example, the rubric that first introduces Tana reads 'Concerning the Tana of India where there are different types of animals and dogs catch mice' ('Di Tanna d'India ove sono diverse generazioni d'animali e' cani vi pigliano i topi'): *Libro delle nuove*, 12, p. 146.

⁵⁸ 'De india e del mar ocian chi circonda latera': BAV, Urb. lat. 1013, Ch. XI, fol. 7v.

⁵⁹ The Dominicans had a convent at Tana by 1312: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 95. As at least one manuscript of this version (BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170) is thought to have been produced and known to have been read by Dominicans, it is possible that the Tana rubric in this version was augmented by knowledge available in missionary circles.

‘India secunda’ is usually grouped with ‘India prima’ and ‘India tertia’, neither of which appear in this text, rather than with the ‘India Superior’ that is identified with Southern China in the rubrics and text, it is clear that the attempt to impose a homogeneous classification system upon the text is in this case not successful. The rubrics in fourteenth-century manuscripts of the *Libro* in fact testify to considerable confusion on the part of their redactors and, as a result, their readers, concerning exactly which Indies Odorico’s text describes, what they should be called, and with what regions they should be identified.

Of the fifteenth-century manuscripts of Odorico’s work of Italian origin examined for this study, the large majority are not furnished with rubrics. Few (four), whether in Latin or in a vernacular, have subsequently been furnished with scribal or readerly marginalia. Exceptional here is the scribal toponymic gloss added to the late fifteenth-century Latin text in BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.b. This gloss, in the same humanistic-influenced cursive as the text, does no more than pull toponyms from the main text into its margins. The sole rubricated manuscript viewed, Florence, BNC, Panc. 92, is, though a vernacular version, of a different textual tradition to that of the *Libro* discussed above. Rather than presenting Odorico’s text as a geography, the rubrics of BNC, Panc. 92 preface the information they highlight with introductory phrases such as ‘Odorico writes’ (‘Quivi ffratte adorgho iscrive’, fol. 165r), ‘here Odorico tells [...]’ (‘Quivi conta fratte adoriggho[...]’, fol. 166r) and ‘how Odorico found [...]’ (‘Come fratte adoriggho [...] trovo, 165v). Thus the paratext in this instance aids the reader to approach the text not as a repository of geographical information, but, very much in the spirit in which it was written, as a personal itinerary.⁶¹ The contrast in the Italian manuscript traditions between the presentation of Odorico’s itinerary in the fifteenth-century manuscripts examined and that of Marco’s *Book* is immediately striking. Evidence of use of the text as a

⁶⁰ *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 139-41. The chapter list of BAV Urb lat. 1013 refers to ‘lagrande india’ (fol. 3r) whilst the in-text rubric for the same chapter refers to ‘la seconda India’ (fol. 16v), further testifying to and multiplying the terminological confusion.

⁶¹ The paratext-author’s attempts to interpret Odorico’s references to the tripartite Indies are chaotic. No division is made between the text’s description of the Middle East and India. Instead the paratext ‘Come fratte adoriggho ando inve[r]so l’india maggiore’ (fol. 159r) occurs at the point where Odorico recounts taking the caravan route which leads to India via Hormuz. ‘India maggiore’ is never mentioned again either in text or in paratext. Thus, following his discussion of the islands of the Indian ocean, the paratext has Odorico leave an ‘India’ (not ‘India maggiore’) that he has never,

tool for geographical enquiry is almost entirely lacking. Only a single manuscript is provided with a scribal paratext with any kind of geographical focus, and that focus is strictly toponymic, testifying to a perception of the limits of usefulness of the text.⁶²

4.3.2.2 The Francophone continent

The Latin and French manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* from the Francophone continent tend to be well-produced, rubricated versions that divide the text according to the cities, kingdoms and regions encountered in the itinerary. The provision of scribal direction or readerly notes, however, whether to draw attention to or attempt to analyse the geographical information that the text provides or whether to supplement problems, inconsistencies and gaps in the text's rubrics, is rare. BN, f. lat. 3195 (a composite manuscript containing, in addition to the French-produced *Recensio brevior*, the Latin Marco Polo of Italian production discussed in 4.3.1.1), features extensive marginal paratext in the form of notes and non-verbal signs that is concerned almost exclusively with marvellous, exotic and ethnographic elements from the text. Although its chapter headings are sometimes confusing in their presentation of the locations discussed, the annotator does not use his marginalia to aid comprehension.⁶³ Thus the manuscript is ill-adapted, even with its abundant paratext, for use as a source of geographical information concerning India.

The pattern of readerly annotation in Glasgow, Hunter 458 functions in a similar manner to the marginal paratext of BN, f. lat. 3195. This manuscript likewise is divided with rubrics that are somewhat intermittent in their presentation of a geographic schema within which to read Odorico's work. The paratext has been supplemented by a programme of annotation in a late-fifteenth- or early-sixteenth-century freehand. In every case, however, the addition simply entails noting and bracketing references to the marvellous, the idolatrous and to alien customs, with no

according to the text, entered, and move towards a newly-introduced India Superior ('euene inuerso In[d]ia sopriore'): BNC, Panc. 92, fol. 169r.

⁶² The toponymic paratext in BAV, 5256.b bears a striking visual similarity to the primarily toponymic paratexts added to many manuscripts of Poggio's *India* (3.4).

⁶³ For example, this version compresses information about Minabar (Malabar), Polumbum (Quilon) and Mobar (Maabar, the Coromandel Coast) into a single chapter headed 'concerning the land where pepper is grown, where ginger is grown, the body of St. Thomas' ('de terra ubi nascitur piper, ubi cenciber, corpore s. thome'), giving the impression that all these features belong to the same 'terra': fol. 19r.

reference to the islands or regions to which they pertain (for Malabar and Mobar, fols 115v-116r). The remaining traces, then, suggest a reader wandering vicariously through a landscape of undifferentiated, unspecific foreignness.

As the Table 6 shows, the surviving high-status French language manuscripts of the *Relatio* tend not to be furnished with scribal marginalia and to have been read without recourse to readerly annotation.⁶⁴ It is to the rubrics, therefore, that readers would have looked for guidance and help with interpretation. These manuscripts were not, however rubricated in such a way as to prioritise geographical information or to aid understanding of the locations described in relation to one another and other parts of the known world. The rubrics of Jean de Vignay's translation in Paris, BN, 3085 Rothschild, like those of the Italian manuscript BNC, Panc. 92 discussed above, prioritise Odorico's experience of his itinerary, rather than the geographical or other observations that he reports.⁶⁵ The rubrics tend to deal inconsistently with the main text's transition from place to place. Tana, Melibar (Malabar) and Mobar (the Coromandel Coast) are not introduced individually; indeed, Melibar is not named at all by the rubric, but is introduced simply as 'the land where pepper grows'.⁶⁶ India Superior, here translated in the main text variously as 'l'autre Ynde, [...] la Haute' and 'Ynde la Plus Haute' is, moreover, not identified in its usual position — the rubric to Odorico's text on Manzi — resulting in the loss of a sense of transition between two distinct regions.⁶⁷

Although the later French translation of Jean le Long is generally a significantly more fluent rendering of the *Recensio Guillelmi* than the stilted Latinate prose of Jean de Vignay, the later translation presents no less confused a framework for understanding the geography of the East.⁶⁸ Unaccountably, Jean le Long's rubrics translate Guglielmo's Latin reference to 'India quae est infra terram' as 'la haulte Inde', whilst Jean le Long's main text sometimes translates the same phrase as 'Inde

⁶⁴ Only BN, f. fr. 1380 contains some relevant readers' notes, as well as a post-medieval interlinear gloss on the text's vocabulary.

⁶⁵ For example, 'How the friar left Chaldea and entered into India' ('comment le frere se parti de caldee et sen ala en ynde'): BN, 3085 Rothschild, fol. 109r.

⁶⁶ 'la terre ou le poivre croist': fol. 215v

⁶⁷ 'comment il vint en la province de manci': fol. 220v.

⁶⁸ For the two translations, see 3.3.2.

la majour’, and sometimes simply as ‘Inde’.⁶⁹ The rubric’s use of the term ‘la haulte Inde’ to introduce Odorico’s account of his crossing over to mainland India causes significant problems, however, when, later in the text, a phrase is required to translate the rubric introducing ‘India Superior’ (Manzi), the paratext is obliged to re-use ‘la haulte Inde’, thereby rendering Odorico’s already confusing division of the Indies entirely nonsensical.⁷⁰

4.3.2.3 England

I have discussed above (3.3.2) the distinctively scholarly appearance and function that appears to dominate amongst the surviving manuscripts of Odorico’s *Relatio* that derive from England. The majority of these, which uniformly contain Latin versions of the text, are marked up in some way, largely by marginal paratext, but occasionally by readerly annotation. In their presentation of the *Relatio* as a work of scholarly value, the scribal and readerly paratexts in these manuscripts regularly demonstrate the text being read for a variety of types of geographical information (see Table 6). Five of the six surviving fourteenth-century English manuscripts of the *Relatio* contain evidence of participants in the production process supplementing the rather meagre geographical direction provided by the rubrics and chapter headings –where these exist – with marginal notes, whilst two copies contain readers’ annotations. The fourteenth-century institutional manuscript Camb., CCC 407 (*Guecelli* recension) features, in addition to its basic set of rubricated chapter divisions that pay little attention to the itinerary’s progression through geographical space, a set of scribal marginal notes, also in red and consistent with the hand of the in-text rubrics.⁷¹ The marginal scribal paratext to this manuscript pre-reads Odorico’s account and redirects its readers’ attention to matters other than those highlighted by the manuscript’s original rubrics which, in Odorico’s description of India, are often careless in their localisation of specific details. The marginal

⁶⁹ BN, f. fr. 2810, known as the ‘Livre des merveilles’, has ‘Inde’ only in the text (fol. 99r) as does BN, f. fr. 12202 (fol.111r), whereas BN, f. fr. 1380 (the base manuscript for Cordier’s edition) has ‘Inde la major’: *Les Voyages en Asie*, 9, p. 69.

⁷⁰ *Les Voyages en Asie*, 20, p. 245.

⁷¹ The rubric for Malabar reads ‘Quomodo habetur piper et ubi nascitur’: fol. 75v; for Mobar it reads ‘De quodam ydolo mirabili et de quibusdam ritibus eorum’: fol. 76v; for Campa (Indochina) ‘De multitudine piscium qui se prociunt in aridam’: 78v. The text in BL, Royal 14.C.XIII, probably a direct copy of that in Cambridge, CCC 407, also shares its rubrics. Both manuscripts were at one stage owned by Simon Bozoun, Prior of Norwich Cathedral Priory (3.3.3.1).

direction, for example, picks out the text's references to cities, marking 'ci' in the margin in red (such as at Polumbum, fol. 75v), as well as picking out other names mentioned in the text such as Tana and Hormuz with marginal nota marks and, sometimes, highlighting place names with red (fol. 70v). Many of the marginal scribal notes in this manuscript, then, appear designed to enable readers to better localise the information that the text contains by clearly differentiating the stages of Odorico's itinerary.

Similarly scholarly and careful programmes of marginal scribal paratext are also added to the fourteenth-century scholarly manuscripts of the work in its *Guecelli* recension, Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib, Digby 166. In both cases, a lack of chapter headers is compensated for by copious scribal paratext. I have discussed in 3.3.3.1 how both physical texts show a dominant concern to provide their readers with a framework for correctly reading and understanding Odorico's account of his fellow Franciscans' martyrdoms. Once the main text has moved on from the account of the Tana martyrdoms, however, to the description of Malabar and the Coromandel Coast, the paratext authors of both manuscripts highlight details such as idolatrous practices, wonders, local customs and exotic produce. Following the itinerary's departure from the Indian mainland, however, the scribe-annotators of both manuscripts change the principle according to which they annotate the text, moving into a chorographic mode. From this point on they instead place the name of each island that Odorico mentions in the margin alongside the head of its associated text (Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fols. 50r-51v, Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fols. 39v-40r), specifying in each case whether the place concerned is an island, a country or a kingdom. Finally, the scribal direction of both manuscripts glosses Odorico's regional divisions. The paratext author of Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 makes an impressive attempt at making sense of the main text's ever-confusing reference to 'India que est infra terram', placing alongside it the note 'De India in[fra] Caldea' (fol. 45r). Also annotated is Odorico's summary information about the islands of the East and the transition to India Superior.⁷² Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 features similar paratexts, but with the interesting addition of a note that interprets Odorico's unspecified 'ista India' (comprising the subcontinent, Indochina and islands as far east as Southern

China), as ‘India inferior’, clearly intended to complement Odorico’s reference to ‘India Superior’ and offer a complete and homogeneous schema for understanding the East.⁷³ Both paratexts also show an unusual interest in current Christian geography: indeed, the paratext-author of Digby 11 writes ‘loca fratrum’ alongside an incidental mention of the Franciscan mission post at Zayton in Odorico’s text. (fol. 48v). The same interest is shown by the scribal-annotator of Bodl. Lib, Digby 166.⁷⁴

The annotation alongside the copy of the *Relatio* in BL, Arundel 13 is only that of the later annotator of this twice-annotated manuscript, probably reading in the fifteenth century. Although this annotation shows a somewhat scholarly attitude brought to bear upon Odorico’s text, it nevertheless adds few tools to aid the readers’ geographical understanding, particularly surprising given the manuscript’s lack of chapter headers.⁷⁵ Amongst copious notes concerning exotic customs and the martyrdom of Odorico’s Franciscan brethren, the readerly annotations draw out occasional references such as to the ‘dead sea’ (‘mare mortuum’) and the number of islands found in India (fol. 45r). This annotator also shows concern to link the geography of India to biblical geography, adding, as well as a note of the location of St. Thomas’ tomb, a detailed annotation to the text’s reference to Adam’s Peak in Sri Lanka, and its associated legendary lake of Adam and Eve’s tears (fol. 44v).⁷⁶

The fact that the fifteenth-century readerly annotator of BL, Arundel 13 draws so little geographical information from Odorico’s text is remarkable, given that it contrasts sharply with the same annotator’s treatment of Marco Polo’s *Book* in the same volume, discussed in 4.3.1.3 above. Whereas the programme of annotation to Marco’s *Book* extracts and notes geographical data in the margin, that in the *Relatio* contents itself with noting wonders and ethnographic practices, and with occasional

⁷² The annotation is cropped and rubbed in places. The unfortunately cropped note relating to the islands of India reads ‘De Indya insu[pra] quot insulas conti[net]’: Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fol 52r.

⁷³ ‘de india inferi[o]ri ulterius non [lo]quitur’: Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fol. 41r.

⁷⁴ ‘nota que in caychon sunt 2 loca fratrum’: fol. 38v. The specifically Franciscan interests may suggest a Franciscan production milieu. See 3.3.3.1 for Ker’s suggestion of a Franciscan provenance for Digby 11.

⁷⁵ Textual divisions are signalled only by small, two-colour decorated initials.

⁷⁶ St. Thomas’ tomb is at fol. 43r. Alongside Sri Lanka is noted: ‘concerning the mountain on which, in the opinion of these people, Adam grieved for his son Abel for 100 years and concerning the well of his tears and those of Eve’ (‘de monte in quo secundum opinionem istorum Adam planxit filium suum Abel c. annis et de puteo [l]acrimarum eius et Eue’): fol. 44v.

cross-references to similar customs where they also appear in Marco's text.⁷⁷ No attempt is made to draw out the geographical details from the *Relatio*, as is done with Marco's *Book*, or to link it with a wider geographical schema. As a repository for details of Christian geography, however, Odorico's text appears to be trusted.⁷⁸

The scribal and readerly glosses to the English manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* show that this text, clearly intended in its *Guecelli* recension to promote the sanctity of its protagonist and the Franciscan friars whose martyrdoms it narrates, was read in ways that exceeded this projected function. Whilst the paratexts and notes always pay careful attention to the hagiographical section of the work, they also sometimes draw out from the text information on places, territorial divisions and apocryphal Christian geography such as the position of the tomb of St. Thomas or the location of Adam's fall from paradise. The type of 'geographical' annotation that occurs in these manuscripts suggests, moreover, an attitude towards understanding the world in which spatial awareness is of lesser significance than Christian topography, in which the locations of martyrdoms and of biblical or apocryphal events are identified, and the spread of Christian mission stations through the world is recorded. The annotated manuscripts of the *Relatio* circulating in England over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were well-adapted to teach their readers a good deal about the geography of the 'Indies'. They also, however, show us instances of how Odorico's text, though not a geography, could be closely read for its information on the spiritual and physical *mundus*.

4.4 Conclusion

The rubrics, scribal marginal direction, and readerly annotation to manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* do not, on the whole, indicate a consistently high level of comprehension and assimilation of the geographical elements of the *Book* and the *Relatio* amongst their readers. The spatial situations of

⁷⁷ Such a cross reference appears at fol. 44r, where the legend of stones that protect against iron is recounted concerning the island of Paten (Bintan or Borneo).

⁷⁸ Towards the very end of the text, the annotator adds marginal exegesis to Odorico's clearly allegorical journey through an unidentified 'perilous valley' that he survives by repeating the phrase 'verbum caro factum est'. The marginal exegesis — unique to this manuscript — here sets out the meaning of certain topographical features mentioned in the anecdote ('iste vallis signat prosperit[at]em mundialem'). The perilous valley, which may well in fact be an entirely allegorical construct without a geographical referent, is not endowed with a physical location in Odorico's text,

regions and territories, and the divisions between them are, as I have shown, often inconsistently presented in the texts themselves. Paratext and marginal annotation only rarely and inconsistently augment the presentation of such elements by drawing out mentions of regional and territorial divisions, indications of direction, distance and the position of Pole Star. Particularly surprising, perhaps, is the inconsistency with which paratexts and annotators note regional divisions and borders, geographical analytical tools that are important in political geography and in descriptions of the world. When paratext authors and readers attempt to link the main texts' geography to extra-textual geographical schemas, in order to make sense of what they read in terms of pre-existing frameworks of knowledge, they often tend instead to betray and to perpetuate great confusion. This indicates a generally confused level of prior knowledge of India and the East on the part of all types of annotator.

The geographical potential of the itinerant and, in part, hagiographical text of Odorico's *Relatio* appears to have been generally less evident to its annotating scribes and readers than that of Marco's *Book*. Thus in BL, Arundel 13, a copiously-annotated manuscript that contains both works, Marco's *Book* features several precise annotations concerning the position of the Pole Star amongst other careful annotations of a geographical nature. The version of Odorico's *Relatio* in the same manuscript features barely any such annotations, though the text contains some similar data. It is perhaps possible, then, to hypothesise that the highly personal narrative subject position and the lack of geographically-aware chapter headers in many manuscript versions of the *Relatio* may have influenced its annotating scribes and readers to approach it for different types of information about the world than was sought in Marco's *Book*. In the English institutional manuscripts in particular, this different information seems to have incorporated Christian geography, details of missionary endeavours in the east, toponymy and, as will be seen in the next chapter, the situation and behaviours of peoples. Though perhaps not providing the type of geographical information concerning the East that modern scholars have looked for and found in this text, the English manuscripts of this account nevertheless show the text functioning geographically in the broad sense of the word discussed in chapter 1

and thus is not presented as part of his account of 'the Indies' and not discussed here. The episode is at *SF*, I, 37, 491-92.

of this thesis, that is, describing a whole spiritual and physical multi-dimensional *mundus* and the locus of Christian history.

Evidence that the way the texts were read changed over time is limited. Two manuscripts of Marco's *Book* of Italian origin and one in French, and one English Latin manuscript, feature careful, geographically-aware later fifteenth-century annotation. In one case, when the text's identification of the 'provincia' of Lar is replaced in the margin with an 'insula', it is possible that, rather than being a case of simple carelessness, the authority of the ancients has come into conflict with the eyewitness account of a relatively recent traveller. There is, however, no firm evidence in the manuscripts discussed above of influence upon the geographical horizons of expectations of readers approaching these texts from Poggio Bracciolini's fifteenth-century redaction of Niccolò de' Conti's description of India, nor of Ptolemy's *Geography*. The regional divisions and nomenclatures of Poggio and Ptolemy do not appear to have influenced readers or paratext authors' annotations.⁷⁹ As I established in the last chapter, by the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Marco Polo's *Book* was circulating amongst scholars with humanistic interests who would have had access to Ptolemy's *Geography* and, later, Poggio's *India*. In one instance, as noted in 3.2.1.2, a cross-reference is made between Marco's *Book* and Niccolò's account, indicating that both works were known to the same individual. However, copies of Poggio's text, which circulated both independently and as part of his *De varietate fortunae* in a somewhat limited, humanistic and scholarly circle, were often marked up in a certain specific and unusual way. A significant proportion of manuscripts of the independent version feature a scribal marginal paratext that draws out the text's place names and categorises them as 'civitas', 'contrata' and 'insula' respectively.⁸⁰ Although it is true that geographically-analytical scribal and readerly marginalia becomes more common, particularly in manuscripts of Marco's *Book*, in the fifteenth century, the

⁷⁹ Ptolemy's primary divisions are 'India intra Gangem' and 'India extra Gangem' (see Figure 1). Poggio, evidently under the influence of Ptolemy, divides the area into India west of the Indus; India between Indus and Ganges, and Ulterior India beyond the Ganges, that he seems broadly to equate with Cathay. Elsewhere in his text, Poggio also refers to 'interior India' and 'maior India', which may reflect Niccolò de' Conti's divisions, rather than those Poggio has taken from Ptolemy: Poggio, *De L'Inde*, p. 134; p. 112; p. 116.

⁸⁰ For example, in the mid- and later-fifteenth-century copies in: Vatican, BAV, Vat. lat. 6265; Vatican, BAV, Ross. lat. 369; Vatican, BAV, Urb. lat. 224; Vatican, BAV, Vat. lat. 1785; Florence, BNC, Magl. XXI. 151; Laurenziana, Plut. 90, S. 55; London, BL, Add. 25712.

specific format of paratext found in such manuscripts of Poggio's *India* is not replicated, with the closest parallel arising in the onomastic gloss to the vernacular text of Odorico in BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.b (4.3.2.1). The lack of cross-fertilization between paratexts and notes on these texts may suggest, then, that, irrespective of what appears to a modern audience a similarity in subject matter between all three texts, differences in the tone, presentational format, projected functions, and projected audiences of these texts affected not only who read these texts, but how they were approached.

Chapter 5: Reading Indian Ethnography in the *Book* and the *Relatio*: The Manuscript Evidence

5.1 Introduction: ethnographic writing in the later Middle Ages

Irrespective of the space in their texts devoted to the description of peoples, neither Marco nor Odorico set out, whether at the outset of their journeys or at the outset of the process of textual composition, specifically to produce ethnographic texts. Neither author or amanuensis articulated or followed a set and specific method for gathering ethnological data in the field; nor did they follow any articulated anthropological rules in their interpretation of their data at the time of composing or dictating their observations in the form of travel accounts. They did not, moreover, exclude from their accounts the testimony of other witnesses concerning customs and practices that they had not personally witnessed. Nor did they consistently differentiate ethnographic data for which they relied on second-hand evidence from that which derived from their personal experience.¹ Because of the apparently unscientific approaches of these and other medieval texts that contain descriptions of peoples, the notion of the existence of ethnography in medieval texts has long been a problematic one. The problem is well exemplified in Margaret Hodgen's important historical survey, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Hodgen classes Marco Polo, along with other producers of descriptive, detailed travel accounts, as 'to some degree an intellectual innovator, a breaker of the spell of ethnological tradition'.² On the other hand, in Hodgen's reading, medieval works that contained detailed descriptions of peoples all lacked something fundamental to

¹ Marco's protestation that he recounts only what he has seen himself or what he has heard from those worthy of faith is contained in the *Book's* opening rubric. Though he claims that he will narrate things seen as seen and heard as heard, he does not do so. *Divisament*, 1, p. 305. Odorico also claims to report only things personally seen or heard from credible persons: *SF*, I, 38, 494.

² Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), p. 102. Few works have dealt in any detail with the early history of ethnographic writing and the anthropological discipline since Hodgen. For an exception see Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, 'Medieval Ethnography', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, 13 (1982), 272-86. The recent survey of developments in anthropology by Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sivert Nielsen deals only briefly with ethnography's 'Beginnings': *A History of Anthropology* (London: Pluto, 2001), pp. 1-9.

ethnological and anthropological enquiry and to ethnographic textual production. She identifies this conceptual lacuna as ‘scientific curiosity’. Though willing to grant Marco Polo some measure of ‘curiosity’, she finds even his ‘curiosity’ lacking: specifically, it lacks ‘the scientific impulse to find out, if possible, why people were as they were’.³ A very similar criticism of Marco Polo’s *Book* is contained in Fernandez-Armesto’s discussion of medieval ethnography. Having determined that ‘recognisably scientific ethnography’ must include ‘accuracy of observation, reliance on genuine observation rather than hearsay, and attempted objectivity’, Fernandez-Armesto finds, not surprisingly, that few medieval observers and writers on other cultures meet these criteria.⁴

For medievalists, there are a number of problems with the assumptions that underlie Hodgen’s and Fernandez-Armesto’s theoretical positions. The adjective ‘scientific’, in Hodgen’s text used as an absolute, is in fact culturally relative and dependent on a given society’s definition and practice of science. Moreover, to suggest that ethnographical writing of the period was unscientific because it lacked ‘the scientific impulse to find out, if possible, why people were as they were’ is to make certain unsustainable assumptions concerning the function of the physical and human sciences in the period under discussion. As I have discussed in 1.1, modes of geographical writing throughout the Middle Ages generally presented an inclusive understanding of the concept of the *mundus*. Very often, the chorographic accounts in *descriptiones orbis terrarum* focused as much — if not more — on the real and fabulous peoples inhabiting the lands described as they did upon their physical situation and location. The logic of this is clear: if the *mundus* (the terrestrial, celestial, physical and spiritual world) is the creation and expression of its creator, then the variety of human creatures in it formed part of this expression and could, in principle, be understood theologically. In practice, their precise place and function in the harmonious terrestrial and celestial balance and in Christian universal history was often very obscure. However, this place and function was nevertheless a valid object of study and speculation.

³ Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, p. 103. In a similar piece of reasoning, Eriksen and Nielsen consider that ‘anthropological inquiry’, or ethnographic fieldwork, only becomes ‘anthropology’ ‘when data and theory are integrated’: *History of Anthropology*, p. 8.

⁴ Fernandez-Armesto, ‘Medieval Ethnography’, p. 276.

In fact, it is precisely because the premises of medieval and modern ethnographic writing are so different that it is important to examine the former carefully, and with a clear understanding of the discontinuities between medieval and modern ways of constructing and understanding human difference. Working along this line of enquiry, Robert Bartlett has questioned the validity of the use of the word 'race' in relation to the medieval period, noting that '[t]he medieval situation was one where "race" almost always means the same thing as "ethnic group". Outside the slave markets of Genoa and such places, visible somatic features were relatively unimportant markers. Communities were differentiated by language and customs, the latter including law and religion'.⁵ Similarly, in as yet unpublished work, Suzanne Conklin Akbari has carefully examined the deployment of ethnographic categories with reference to the construction and comprehension of Saracens and their place in the world in the *Opus maius* of Roger Bacon.⁶ Such work, which undertakes to determine and examine on their own terms the categories and markers that such authors employ to construct and understand human difference, evidence of medieval writers' mode of scientific comprehension of the world around them, is as yet not common. It is perhaps for this reason that the idea of the existence of ethnographic writing in this period has been so cautiously and ambivalently discussed before now.⁷ However, if we view the construction and deployment such categories and markers for describing and understanding human difference as the work of ethnography, then Marco Polo's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* are, though not ethnographies in the strict modern sense of the word, undoubtedly works that contain ethnographic elements. It is therefore valid and important for the purposes of this thesis to examine both the categories and markers employed in these texts' constructions of human difference and how these functioned to direct the responses

⁵ Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', *JMEMS*, 31 (2001), 39-56 (p. 53).

⁶ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Ambivalence and Assimilation: Islamic Science and Philosophy in Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius*', paper given at the International Medieval Congress (University of Leeds, 10-13 July 2006). An expanded version of this paper is to appear in a monograph *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (forthcoming, 2007).

⁷ J. K. Hyde, for example, saw Marco and Odorico among other medieval travellers as producers of an ethnography before its time, thus casting them in the role of the exceptions that prove the general rule that ethnography does not exist as a genre before 1450: J. K. Hyde, 'Ethnographers in Search of an Audience', in *Literacy and its Uses: Studies on Late Medieval Italy*, ed. by Daniel Waley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 162-216 (p. 207).

and comprehension of those who read the ethnographic material contained in these texts.

Irrespective of the absence of articulated methodology, then, both Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* sometimes function ethnographically, describing and, sometimes, attempting to explain facets of human difference ranging from physical appearance to difference in dress, diet, custom and religious practice. As the following section will show, moreover, they do so in different ways, but ways that are, to a greater or lesser degree, systematic.⁸ In this chapter, then, I use the term ethnographic writing to designate descriptions of specific peoples who belong to the specific places described in travellers' accounts of India that are or purport to derive from first-hand experience and thus are or purport to be factual.⁹ I also employ the adjective 'ethnographic' to identify elements in these texts relating to the description of human difference, and the markers and categories employed to construct and make sense of differences between peoples.

5.2 Reading ethnographic writing: in-text guidance

Both Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* incorporate descriptions of people that employ ethnographic categories and markers to construct and present a way of understanding human difference. These categories and markers are not, however, innocent, but function to direct the responses and comprehension of those who read the ethnographic descriptions contained in these texts. Sometimes, in fact, what is presented in the texts as simple ethnographic fact turns out upon examination to incorporate hidden ethnographic analysis that directs and manipulates the responses of the reader. A major element in this manipulation is the deployment, in both texts, of a relatively systematic range of ethnographic markers whose function appears to be to describe peoples, but which in fact place them into loaded categories. Marco's ethnographic markers include characteristics such as the independent or tributary status of a given people, language, religion, food, physical appearance (colour, other

⁸ I do not attempt to engage with Fernandez-Armesto's problematic category of 'accuracy': there are no historically appropriate benchmarks against which such a quality may be measured.

⁹ An evident difficulty with this usage arises from the consideration of texts that modern scholarship has identified as, in the strictest sense, fictional, but that were considered factual accounts by their contemporaries: *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*, *Il piccolo libro di Jacopo di Sanseverino*, and the *Itinerarium* of Johannes Witte being three examples. Texts of this kind and the problems that they raise will be considered in Chapter 7.

physical characteristics), manners, religious customs, funerary customs, clothing and behaviour towards captives in war.¹⁰ Odorico's *Relatio* also deploys such markers, although the range of markers on which he draws is somewhat narrower than that of Marco. The *Relatio* does, however, note the religions, religious and funerary customs, manners, clothing and, sometimes, appearance of peoples, though with a much lesser degree of consistency.¹¹

Whilst neither text explicitly sets out a methodological framework for the production of ethnography, then, both employ a relatively systematic range of ethnographic markers to describe and to categorise peoples. The categories, based on empirically observable details, are deployed in both texts to direct the responses of readers to details and to make sense of otherwise rather disparate information. For example, in both texts, the umbrella term 'idolaters' is employed to cover a multitude of customs and practices that are described or alluded to in more detail in the descriptions. The people of Tana that Odorico notes as worshipping 'fire, snakes and trees' fall into this wider category, as do the people of Polumbo (Quilon), whose reverence for the cow Odorico represents as worship of the animal as a god.¹² In Marco's *Book*, references to 'ydres' or 'ydules' ('idolaters') cover a multitude of peoples engaging in very different religious practices, including devotees of local deities, Buddhists, and indigenous Indonesian cults. Rather than employing, as does Roger Bacon in his *Opus maius*, the term 'pagani' or an equivalent to categorise peoples whose objects of worship are natural, he refers to such peoples as having 'no law', or does not attempt to categorise their form of worship at all.¹³ In addition to

¹⁰ Generally, at least three of these markers are present in any given description. A typical example would be Marco's description of Champa (Vietnam), which begins by noting that the people have their own king and formerly paid no tribute but now pay tribute to the Great Khan and that they have their own language and are idolaters. Later in the description Marco also records a peculiar custom, according to which no woman of the land may be married without first being offered to the king. *Divisament*, 162, pp. 538-39.

¹¹ For example, Odorico notes that the people of Tana are idolaters, and specifically that they worship fire, snakes and trees, that the land is under Muslim control, and that households in the region revere the wood of a particular tree (the *Ocymus*, a variety of basil): *SF*, I, 7, 423.

¹² 'adorant bovem pro deo suo', *SF*, I, 10, 440-41. It is noteworthy that the *Relatio* does not show knowledge of the type of refined categorisation of religions outside the biblical tradition that was set up by Roger Bacon a mere fifty years earlier. Bacon, in part VII of his *Opus maius*, distinguishes between 'idolatri', who worship celestial things but have 'a multiplicity of gods' and 'pagani', for whom 'terrestrial things as well as celestial may be objects of worship': *OM*, I, clvi-clvii; II, 367-72.

¹³ In Ferlec, 'those from the mountains are just like beasts [...] They worship different things' ('celes des montagnes sunt tiel como bestes [...] I]l aorent diverses couses'). In Basma 'they are people who have no law at all, except that of beasts' ('il sunt jens que ne ont nulle loi, se ne come bestes'): *Divisament*, 166, p. 543. Pipino does not, in his translation, substitute the term 'pagan' for the phrase

employing such religious categorisations, both Marco's and Odorico's texts also categorise peoples according to their social behaviours. Thus in Odorico's *Relatio* the people of Lamori (Sumatra) are 'noxious' ('pestifera'), because they eat human flesh even though their island is well-stocked with foodstuffs and those of Dondin (unidentified; perhaps Andaman) are 'evil' ('mali') because 'they eat raw meat, and every other unclean thing that can be mentioned'.¹⁴ However, the *Book* also categorises the peoples it describes both according to religious affiliation and behaviour. The people of Tana (Salsette) are 'ydres', whereas those of Sumatra are 'ydres sauvages'.¹⁵ Whereas Odorico's behavioural categorisations are overtly moral, Marco's categorisations tend on the other hand to make judgements that, although disdainful, are not often explicitly morally condemnatory. Instead, Marco often categorises peoples' human status, using the terms 'bestial' and 'wild' to categorise those whose behaviours he judges to be somehow less than human or uncivilised. Thus the people of Dragoian (Sumatra) whom he reports as killing and eating the sick, are 'very wild'.¹⁶ The people of Necuveran are 'like beasts, and I tell you that they go completely naked, both men and women'; the people of Agaman, who have no king, are also both 'idolaters' ('ydres') and 'like wild beasts', and the people of Samatra are 'bestial people who eat men'.¹⁷ The categorisation of a people as 'wild' or 'bestial', then, purports to be an empirically-based judgement relating to specific customs and behaviours. In some instances it is linked with lack of law or a king; in some with eating of human flesh; in some with the consumption of raw meat and in some with nudity. Although these categories purport to be empirically-based on behaviours, it is important to note that at no stage does the Franco-Italian *Divisament* or any of its derivatives explicitly set out exactly which customs, traits or behaviours mark a people out as 'wild' or 'bestial'.

'they have no law', but retains the concept and phrasing of his source. *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 14 and 15, p. 161.

¹⁴ *SF*, I, 12, 446; 'carnes crudas comedunt, omnemque aliam immunditiam que dici posset': *SF*, I, 18, 455.

¹⁵ *Divisament*, 185, p. 586 and 167, p. 545.

¹⁶ 'mout sauvages': *Milione*, 168, p. 546. Translated by Pipino as 'ualde silvestres': *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 17, p. 163.

¹⁷ The people of Necuveran are 'come bestes; e voç di qu'il vunt tuit nu, e masles e femes [...]; il sunt ydres'. Those of Agaman are 'come bestes sauvages'. Those of Samatra are 'mauvais homes bestiaus que menuient les homes': *Divisament*, 171, p. 549; 172, p. 549; 167, p. 545. Translated by Pipino as 'habitatores regni huius ydolatre sunt et ualde in suis moribus bestiales et ualde silvestres': *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 16, p. 162.

By contrast with Marco's *Book*'s tendency to place peoples in ethnographic categories based upon unstated or unclear ethnographic principles, Odorico's text in Guglielmo da Solagna's recension, whilst often using morally condemnatory language, uses its most condemnatory language to discuss practices rather than peoples. After describing the idolatry of the people of Polumbo and attributing to them a practice of child-sacrifice, the text adds that the people of this place also do many things 'that would be an abomination to write and to hear'.¹⁸ Odorico draws the same chapter to a close, following his description of *satī*, with a similar statement that he omits to write concerning 'the many other wonderful and bestial things that they do in that place'.¹⁹ In both cases it is the practice rather than the people that is condemned. In the reworkings of later redactors, however we often see the condemnation that in the *Guillelmi* recension is directed at practice redirected towards specific *gentes* or *populi*.²⁰

In the *Relatio* as in the *Book*, ethnographic analysis is incorporated into ethnographic descriptions, sometimes overtly, but sometimes concealed as observation or categorisation. Such analysis provides, of course, clear clues to the reader as to the responses that are to be expected of him/ her in the interpretation of the customs and peoples described in each text.

5.3 Reading ethnographic writing: the guidance of prologues and rubrics

All versions of Marco's *Book* examined for the purpose of this thesis present the description of peoples and, specifically, the presentation of differences between peoples, as an important function of the text. The opening rubric to the Franco-Italian (F) redaction of Marco's *Book* presents the text as essential reading for anyone who 'wishes to know the different races of men and the variety of the different regions of the world', a justification that is closely translated into its Tuscan and Venetian versions.²¹ No reason is given for readers' or audiences' projected desire to know about the world's different peoples: the desire itself is presented as reason enough for its fulfilment. In this range of texts, human diversity

¹⁸ 'multa facit populus iste que scribere et audire abhominatio quedam esset': *SF*, I, 10, 441.

¹⁹ 'sic de multis aliis mirabilibus et bestialibus que illic fiunt, que scribere non expedit': *SF*, I, 10, 441.

²⁰ The *Guecelli* recension, for example, terms the idolaters of Polumbum 'populus iste bestialis'; the *Libro delle nuove* terms them a 'perversa e stolta gente': *PN*, IV, 384; *Libro delle nuove*, 18, p. 153.

is presented for the entertainment or the increased knowledge of its readers for its own sake.

The prologue to Francesco Pipino's *Liber de conditionibus*, the most widely-diffused translation of Marco's *Book* across Europe, shows a significant development in justification of the text's presentation of ethnography. Pipino assuages anticipated concern on the part of his readers that the work might seem 'inanis' ('vain'), with his assurance that, on reading it, 'faithful men can be moved to merit abounding grace from the Lord'.²² The precise elements of the *Book* that Pipino suggests will affect readers in this positive way relate primarily to the ethnographic writing it contains:

They [i.e. faithful men], seeing the heathen peoples enveloped in the darkness of such blindness and so deaf, may give thanks to God, who, illuminating his faithful with the light of truth, deigned to call them out of such dangerous darkness into his wonderful light. Or, sorrowing for the ignorance of these people, they may beseech the Lord for the illumination of their hearts. Or, that the yearnings of devoted Christians may be stimulated, because infidel peoples are more eager to venerate simulacra than are many of those who are marked with the sign of Christ to worship the true God. Or, further, that the hearts of some religious will be called, for the sake of spreading the Christian faith, to carry, with the help of the divine spirit, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, betrayed into oblivion amongst such a great multitude of people, to the blinded nations of the infidels, where however great the harvest, the workers are nevertheless few.²³

Pipino's prologue, then, issues specific directions to readers as to how to respond to Marco's ethnography. On the level of terminology, his use of the terms 'gentiles' and 'infideles' works immediately to connect Marco's *Book* (which does not use these terms itself) into a wider schema of Christian history and thought in which these terms are used, theologically and legally, to define and understand non-

²¹ 'volés savoir les deverses jenerasions des homes et les deversités des deverses region dou monde': *Divisament*, p. 305; *Milione*, p. 3; *Il Milione Veneto*, p. 113.

²² 'fideles viros posse multiplicis gracie meritum a domino promereri': *Marka Pavlova*, p. 1.

²³ '[...] videntes [i.e. fideles viri] gentiles populos tanta cecitatis tenebrositate tantisque sordibus inuolutos gracias agant, qui fideles suos luce veritatis illustrans, de tam periculosis tenebris uocare dignatus est in admirabile lucem suum. Seu illorum ignorancie condolentes pro illuminatione cordium ipsorum dominum precabuntur vel in deuotorum christianorum desideria confundentur, quod infideles populi promptiores sunt ad veneranda simulacra quam ad veri dei cultum, prompti sunt plurimi ex hiis, qui Christi sunt caractere insigniti siue eciam religiosorum aliquorum corda peruocari poterunt pro ampliacione fidei christiane, ut nomen domini nostri Jesu Christi in tanta multitudine populorum oblivioni traditum deferant spiritu favente diuino ad occecatas infidelium naciones, ubi messis quidem multa, operarii vero pauci': Prásek, *Marka Pavlova*, p. 1.

Christian peoples, to set out their rights and their prospective roles in universal history.²⁴ Pipino's prologue also presents, however, an explicit agenda for readers approaching his translation. Descriptions of less fortunate, ignorant 'infideles' should elicit responses of thanksgiving, prayer for the unfortunate, self-criticism, and working towards mission. Irrespective of such strict reading guidelines, however, once engaged in the process of translating the text proper, Pipino makes surprisingly few changes to his source text in order to encourage readers to more easily infer the kinds of meanings or to experience the kinds of responses outlined above, limiting himself largely to the addition of perjorative adjectives to references to non-Christian religions.²⁵ Indeed, Pipino's phrase 'I have judged from an examination of this book' indicates that the text's redemptive qualities are to be found in his exemplar, rather than in interpretations that he adds in his translation.²⁶ In fact, the passage suggests that the capacity to engender such types of reaction inheres in the ethnographic writing itself, able to be drawn out by the reading processes of *fideles viri*. Such an implication that the correct sort of reading will be conducted by the correct sort of reader implies on the one hand a level of trust in the reader's judgement, whilst it at the same time presumes a closely-defined reading group within which such an assumption may safely be made.

The major versions of Odorico's *Relatio* examined for this thesis suggest very different accounts of and pretexts for its production and presentation of ethnography. Its Latin versions tend to follow the *Recensio Guillelmi* in showing more concern to justify Odorico's travel and the experiences consequent upon it than to justify the composition of the *Relatio* itself.²⁷ In these versions, it is stressed that Odorico's experiences derive from his activities, permitted to Franciscans in general under a papal bull of 1288 (2.2.1), as a missionary 'to the regions of the infidels', to

²⁴ 'Gentiles' was a term used for pagans or heathens outside the biblical tradition and considered by the Church to have no codified religious law. 'Infideles' was a group created and defined in opposition to 'fideles', and is thus capable of taking in Jews and Muslims in addition to idolaters and heathens. For *gentiles* see Isidore of Seville, 'Gentiles sunt qui sine lege sunt, et nondum crediderunt' ('Gentiles are those who are without law, and have not yet begun to believe'): *Etym*, 1, 8: 10, 2. For *infideles*, see James Muldoon, 'The Nature of the Infidel: The Anthropology of the Canon Lawyer', in *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination*, ed. by Scott D. Westrem (New York: Garland, 1991), pp. 115-24.

²⁵ Dutschke has noted the addition of 'abhominabilis' to references to the Prophet Mohammad, and the addition of 'turpis' to references to non-Christian customs. Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 14.

²⁶ 'consideravi ex huius libri inspectione': *Marka Pavlova*, p. 1.

²⁷ Paulo Chiesa categorises and prints the range of introductions: 'Per un riordino', pp. 334-36.

which he travelled, much in the manner advocated by Francesco Pipino, ‘in order to make some harvest of souls’.²⁸ None of the Latin versions, however, seem to need to justify Odorico’s addition of the ‘many great and wonderful things’ that he claims to have heard and seen to the ‘many and different things concerning the religious observances and situations of this world’ that, as the text admits, have been already been narrated by so many people. Across all versions of Odorico’s text, in fact, a similar pattern emerges. Whilst Odorico’s travels seem to require justification, his dictation of the ‘mirabilia’ that he sees or hears tell of, including the wonders of human variety, do not.²⁹ The reaction anticipated from readers, then, to Odorico’s ethnography appears superficially to be much simpler than that which Francesco Pipino expects from his audience. Accounts of people, it seems, simply fall within Odorico’s larger category of ‘great and wonderful things’. Readers are exhorted to wonder as if from a distance at Odorico’s great and wonderful things for no other reason than that they exist.

I have touched in already in Chapter 4 upon the variety of ways in which the works in question are divided into chapters and rubricated in order to break up texts for ease of reading, to aid study and to act as finding aids. Instances of chapter headings and rubrics directing readers’ attention to ethnographic detail in the text are therefore significant. Very few of the versions of Odorico’s and Marco’s texts are, however, divided into headed or rubricated chapters function in this way.³⁰ Of the few exceptions, the directive functions of rubrics of certain manuscripts of the later Tuscan (TB) translation of Marco’s *Book* are particularly interesting.³¹ The form that

²⁸ ‘Licet multa et varia de ritibus et condicionibus huius mundi a multis enarentur, tamen est sciendum quod ego frater Hodoricus de Foro Iulii volens transfretare et ad partes infidelium volens ire ut fructus aliquos lucrifacerem animarum, multa magna et mirabilia audivi atque vidi que possum veraciter enarrare’: *SF*, I, 1, 413. The Bohemian Franciscan Henry of Glatz, adds a sentence to his recension of 1340 stressing that Odorico travelled with permission: ‘Et hoc de licentia prelatorum meorum, qui hoc concedere possunt secundum regule nostre instituta’: Chiesa, ‘Per un riordino’, p. 335.

²⁹ Most versions of Odorico’s text retain this formula, though sometimes with further introductory material added. See for example Jean le Long’s translation in *Les voyages en Asie*, 1, pp. 3-4, in which the friar travels ‘by commandment of the Holy Father the pope’ (‘par le commandement du saint Pere le Pape’); and Jean de Vignay’s translation, *Les Merveilles de la terre d’Outremer*, p. 3; *Le libro delle nuove*, p. 142. The abbreviated *Memoriale toscano* is unusual in cutting out all explanation: *Memoriale toscano*, p. 93.

³⁰ I have not tabulated these due to the fact that examples are few and space is short. The relevant manuscripts of Marco Polo are: Ashburnham 534, BAV, Barb. lat. 2687, BNC, Magl. XIII.73 (Italy); Stockholm M. 304 (France). The relevant manuscripts of Odorico are: BNC, Conv. Soppr. 7.1170, BAV, Urb. lat. 1013, Casanatense 276, BNC, Panc. 92 (Italy); BN, f. lat 3195 (France).

³¹ Ashburnham 534 and BNC, Magl. XIII.73.

these take is a summary of key, normally marvellous, features belonging to the place discussed in the following section. In practice, these features tend to be overwhelmingly ethnographic in nature. Thus the rubric that introduces Marco's chapter on Maabar in Ashburnham 534 does not introduce the place by name, but instead summarises the chapter with 'How when one burns the body of the King they also burn with him a goodly number of living men and <how> they fish for pearls and of other marvellous things'.³² The rubric for Sri Lanka functions in the same way, drawing attention to the island's legendary ruby ('Duno Bello Rubino che a Irre'), the fact that the people go naked ('Evanno tutti ingniudi') and the erroneous detail that the people eat human flesh ('mangiono carne umana'), but omitting the relevant toponym altogether (fol. 22v). Thus the rubrics of this later Tuscan translation function to direct readers' attention away from toponyms and towards ethnography to such an extent that certain of its chapters are introduced as catalogues of unlocalised, extraordinary marvels.

A similar tendency to direct readers' attention towards ethnographic details occurs in the rubrics to the Italian vernacular translation of Odorico's *Relatio* known as the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose*. When divided into headed chapters, this text features rubrics that not only draw attention to the text's ethnographic details, but also prepare readers to respond to these.³³ In this way, its chapter headings orient the reader to notice reverence towards cattle and *sati*, identified as 'foolish things' in Polumbo, and the nakedness, cannibalism and other 'foolish and unbelievable and inhuman things' done by the people of Lamori.³⁴ In both these cases, the rubricator first of all introduces the place to be discussed by name and then links to it a selection of the marvellous, ethnographic highlights from the chapter that follows, at the same time guiding the reader quite overtly to a response of amazed contempt.

³² 'Come quando sarde il corpo del re assai nardono collui duomin uiui e pescarisi leperle ed altre marauigliose cose': fol. 23r.

³³ The rubrics are printed, based on BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170, in the *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 139-41. These chapter headings also occur in BAV, Urb. lat. 1013, and Marciana, it. cl. XI.32: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 72-80.

³⁴ 'Di Polumbo nel quale nasce il gengiovo e adorano il bue per dio e ll'uomo morto ardeno colla moglie viva e altra stolte cose'; 'Dell'isola Lamori ove perdéo la tramontana, ove li uomini e lle femine vanno nudi e mangiano carne umana e fanno molt'altre stolte e incredibili cose e crudeli': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, 28, p. 153; 20, p. 155.

In the case of both these small vernacular subgroups, then, readers are directed to pay attention to the texts' ethnographies, and to view these as marvellous and strange. In consequence, it is probable that the reader of the text would, following the direction of the rubrics, expect to be confronted with an India similar to that presented by traditional legendary texts such as the *Letter* of Prester John or texts of the Alexander tradition. Such rubrics in fact pick and choose ethnographic details from the texts and deploy them in such a way as to ensure that Marco's and Odorico's Indies appear to conform far more closely to the legendary Indies of Alexander and Prester John than is actually the case.

By means of their prologues, sometimes by rubrics and chapter headings, as well as through the markers and categories employed in the texts proper, both works, in all their textual versions, shape and direct their readers' responses to their descriptions of peoples. Ethnographic categories are supplied, sometimes via a prologue, sometimes via a paratext, sometimes by the text itself. Sometimes these are categories that the reader may make use of to enable him/herself to conceptualise and respond to the peoples presented. On some occasions, however, these masquerade as ethnographic fact and, from that position, may subtly manipulate their readers.

5.4 Marginal paratext and readers' annotation

The following section will discuss the scribal marginal paratext and readerly marginal annotation that has been added to a minority of the surviving manuscripts of Marco's and Odorico's texts that I have personally viewed (see Appendix 3, Tables 7 and 8). It should firstly be noted that, as the information presented by Odorico and Marco differs somewhat, the categories of ethnographic details presented on the tables differ from one another. Even bearing such textually-determined differences in mind, however, it is perhaps surprising to see no absolutely common ground across manuscripts in the marginalia of this type. Some details, however, are annotated more frequently than others; specifically, cannibalism; tailed men (in Marco's *Book*); dog-headed men; nudity and idolatrous practices. A religious ritual, recounted by both travellers, of self-sacrifice in honour of an idol, is noted slightly less frequently, and the practice of *satī*, again, mentioned in both accounts, less regularly still. In Odorico's text, the account, attributed to Mobar (Maabar) of a festival during which worshippers are said to have died

beneath the wheels of the idol-bearing chariot, regularly attracts the attention of annotators. In addition to the details noted, however, this section will also examine the tone and function of marginal paratext and annotation, which may range from an unembellished indication of the details presented in the text, to the interpretation of such details as wonders, to the addition of judgmental comments. Finally, a very few physical texts may bear traces of highly idiosyncratic and personal responses to the information the works contain.

5.4.1 Marco Polo's *Book*

5.4.1.1 The Italian States

Very few sustained programmes of marginal paratext or readers' annotation are in evidence in the fourteenth-century Italian manuscripts examined for this thesis. Of the two complete exceptions, BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170 (Latin) and BNC, II.IV.136 (vernacular), the former features what appears to be readers' annotation in the form of non-verbal symbols, whereas the paratext of the latter was added in its production process. In both cases, the annotator pays attention to the text's ethnographic staples: cannibalism, physical monstrousness, nudity and idolatrous practices, but in the case of the Latin (P) text of BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170, the manicules that direct attention are not able to express tone or construct thought. The marginal paratext of the Tuscan (TA) text in BNC, II.IV.136, however, incorporates verbose and expressive marginal commentary composed, like the main text it augments, in the vernacular. This annotator, approximately one third of whose notes relate to the text's ethnographic information, shows a specific interest in the reported use of augury amongst the 'Bregomanni' or Brahmans, which he notes three times.³⁵ This paratext author sees fit, moreover, to direct the response of the reader morally as well as in terms of interest. Thus in two instances he draws attention away from Marco's presentation of the virtuous aspects of the Brahmans' way of life, such as their honesty, and onto their dependence on augury in business, finishing with a note that condemns their 'spravita', a judgement that appears to be linked, by its

³⁵ BNC, II.IV.136, fol. 50r; fol. 52r; *Milione*, 173, p. 250.

placement alongside the main text, to their dependence on drinking quicksilver in order to secure long life.³⁶

Although the manuscript itself and its occasional scribal reading direction dates to the later fourteenth century, the extensive programme of readerly marginalia to the close Latin translation of a Tuscan (TA) text in BN, f. lat. 3195 appears to be a later, probably fifteenth-century, addition to the manuscript. This manuscript is exceptional in that it features in excess of sixty readerly notes in the relevant section. An indication of the significance of the text's ethnographic information for its readers is the fact that approximately one third of these notes relate to the text's ethnographic details.³⁷ The annotating reader of this manuscript notes almost every major ethnographic topos that the text includes. This particular annotator's notes are not purely indicative in function moreover. In addition to adding marginal exhortations to observe ('nota') certain customs or traits, he adds orthodox judgements on these. Thus we see peoples placed by the text and its translator into the category of 'bestial men' ('homines bestiales') placed in the same category by the marginal annotator (such as at Necuram (Nicobar), fol. 54r). Customs condemned in the text are also condemned in the margins in similar terms: the anthropophagic euthanasia attributed to Dragoian, introduced as an 'evil custom' in this translation as in its Tuscan (TA) source, attracts the comment that 'this custom is most evil'.³⁸

Working very much according to the interpretative guidelines set out by Francesco Pipino, by whose translation the redactor of the text in BN, f. lat. 3195 is clearly influenced,³⁹ the annotator of this manuscript also, on occasion, passes marginal judgements on customs and practices not explicitly condemned by the text itself. Thus the custom in Maabar of burning the dead king's companions with him

³⁶ Alongside the main text's reference to the use of divination in business practice appears the following badly cropped note, with [?] standing for a lacuna of uncertain length: 'di choloro che u[?] et fanno le mer[?]tie adaghere'. The words 'de la spravita' and the fragment 'brego[?]' can clearly be made out in the remnants of a note alongside Marco's account of their diet: fol. 52r.

³⁷ Other sections of the manuscript, including the Odorico with which the *Book* is bound, feature scribal marginal direction. Book 3 of the *Liber de conditionibus* does not feature this, but its lack is supplemented by annotation in a different, untidy hand, probably added by a reader at a later date.

³⁸ 'pessima est haec consuetudo' (margin); 'malam consuetudinem' (main text): fol. 54r; 'male costume': *Milione*, 164, p. 229. I thank Christine Gadrat (IHRS, CNRS, Paris) for kindly providing me with her transcriptions from this section of the manuscript.

³⁹ Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 429.

is glossed ‘note this detestable custom’, and the King of Chamba’s number of wives and manner of taking them with ‘note this worthless custom’.⁴⁰ Interestingly, such repetition of condemnatory phrases appears to have a cumulative detrimental effect on this annotator’s tolerance-levels. After making several such notes condemning individual customs, the annotator, on reaching the text’s reference to *satī*, remarks ‘another worthless, vainglorious custom’.⁴¹ It is noteworthy, however, that although the judgement and language of this note is wholly independent of the literally translated passage it sits alongside, the interpretation it offers is orthodox and demonstrates Marco’s ethnographic interludes functioning for readers in ways consistent with certain of those outlined in Francesco Pipino’s prologue.

Of the two fifteenth-century manuscripts of Italian origin to feature marginal paratext, Riccardiana 1924, is by far the more comprehensively annotated. The marginal paratext, in red ink, in this manuscript consistently draws the reader’s attention to the usual range of ethnographic details, but shows a particular interest in pointing out nudity amongst the peoples Marco describes. The notes, like the text itself, are in *volgare*, and do no more than extract points of interest from the text and place them in the margin.⁴² Thus alongside the funeral rites of those who sacrifice themselves in Maabar appears ‘they burn the dead bodies’ (‘ardeno li corpi morti’, fol. 42r). Often failing to identify the place to which particular peoples and customs are to be attributed, the notes can be cryptic to the point of incomprehensibility if taken separately from the text proper, as is the case with the note ‘boy’ alongside Marco’s description of the reverence of the people of Maabar for the ox (fol. 42r).⁴³ Thus the marginal notes to Riccardiana 1924 perform a purely indicative function of enabling readers to find particular ethnographic details on a second reading. They offer no help, however, to enable the reader to analyse or judge the ethnographic information the manuscript presents.

⁴⁰ ‘nota detestabilem consuetudinem’: fol. 54v; ‘nota vilem consuetudinem’: fol. 53r.

⁴¹ ‘Iterum inanis glorie vana consuetudo’: fol. 55v.

⁴² Certain of the directions do not appear on the same folio as the text to which they refer, a puzzling feature that may indicate that some of the annotation is copied along with the text from an exemplar. An example can be found at f. 41v, where a note pertaining to self-sacrifice before idols is brought forward and placed alongside Marco’s account of the poor treatment of horses in India.

⁴³ *Il Milione Veneto*, 137, p. 232.

A similar function is performed by the programme of scruffily-written reader's marginalia, sometimes written but often merely manicules and bracketing, that annotates the third book of Pipino's Latin translation in BAV, Barb. lat. 2687. These could have functioned to aid a reader to find known material again in an already familiar manuscript, but could not have directed a first reading of the text. The type of information that this annotator picks out in this way includes *satī*, self-sacrifice and other idolatrous practices and, as usual, cannibalism but not physical differences or monstrosity. A similarly sparse level, but rather more idiosyncratic selection, of annotation appears in the moderately high-quality manuscript of Pipino's Latin contained in BN, f. lat. 6244 A. Of only six annotations in Book 3 of the text, four relate to ethnographic matters such as royal funeral rites in Maabar (fol. 105v), and the religious sect who eat no green plants (fol. 109v). This reader passes in silence over the more frequently-noted ethnographic details presented by the text, including the almost ubiquitously-noted cannibalism, tailed men and cenocephali.

The later fifteenth-century annotator of the unusually densely-annotated Latin manuscript, BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641 employs roughly one fifth of his extensive annotations to highlight ethnographic information, noting physical differences (monstrosity, colour), differences of custom (dress and nudity), religious practices and customs (idolatry, *satī*, self-sacrifice before idols) and sexual morality. Two characteristics in particular are remarkable about the annotations in this manuscript. Even when faced with a variety of types of cannibalism, with self-sacrifice before idols, with *satī*, and with reports of the 'indiscriminately wanton' sexual morality of Coilum (Quilon), the annotator expresses no moral outrage.⁴⁴ In addition, the annotator's judgements relating to the text's ethnographic descriptions are of an analytical rather than of a moral nature. Thus the annotator records a quite extraordinary 'it is not true' ('non est verum', fol. 93r) alongside the text's mention of the tailed men supposed to inhabit the interior of Sumatra; an analytical 'homines deformes' alongside the text's cenocephali (fol. 93v).⁴⁵ The paratext-author's most unusual annotation is, however, his marginal identification of the ascetic Brahman

⁴⁴ 'omnes communiter luxuriosi sunt': *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 31, p. 179.

⁴⁵ Dutschke suggests that this relates to a close reading of Pipino's description, according to which the men of Agaman have 'heads just like' or 'almost like' those of dogs ('caput quasi caninum'): *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 21, p. 164; Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 97.

sect whose members eat no green plants with the word ‘pythagorici’.⁴⁶ Rather than commenting on the sect’s error in their belief that green plants have souls, the annotator instead apparently identifies a similarity with the doctrine of *metempsychosis* or the transmigration of souls attributed to the ancient Pythagoreans, and the subject of some discussion amongst certain later fifteenth-century Italian humanists engaged in an attempt to harmonise Platonic thought with Christian doctrine. For such a project, of which Marsilio Ficino was a prominent proponent, the potential influence upon Plato of Pythagoras and the concept of *metempsychosis*, manifestly irreconcilable with Christianity, was a potentially serious problem.⁴⁷ In the light of its late-fifteenth-century context, this annotation may indicate Marco’s *Book* not only being read in the ambit of such humanist, philosophical scholarship, but also being manipulated in a way anticipated neither by the text, nor its paratexts, to help its reader to illuminate a contemporary philosophical debate.

5.4.1.2 The Francophone continent

Amongst the usually sparsely-annotated or unannotated manuscripts from French-speaking regions, there are very few that demand discussion here. However, the unusually full programme of readerly marginalia in multiple hands appended to the text of Francesco Pipino’s translation in BL, Add. 19513 stands out. Using symbols (see 4.3.1.2) and, occasionally, written notes the annotators of this text mark references to cannibalism, wild men, idolatry, and physical difference, showing a pattern of interest typical across well-annotated manuscripts. The cryptic nature of these often non-verbal annotations, however, makes their interpretation difficult.

Stockholm M 304, a fourteenth-century French-language manuscript, is the sole vernacular copy to contain significant pre-sixteenth-century annotation. However, these fifteenth-century readerly annotations show only limited and superficial interest in the text’s ethnographic information concerning the ‘three Indies’ by comparison with the detailed and specific attention paid to the ocean sea, the islands of the East and the limits of India. Surprisingly, the annotator overlooks almost all the usual points of interest: cannibalism, tailed men, nudity, and various idolatrous religious customs and practices, noting instead only the cenoccephali of

⁴⁶ *Marka Pavlova*, 3, 30 p. 177; BAV, Ottob. lat 1641, fol. 100v.

Andaman (fol. 75v) and the islands of the men and women (fol. 86v). The attitude that the annotator records to the cenoccephali, noted with ‘here indeed there are men who have dog-like heads’ indicates that it is not scepticism that prevents him from commenting on or from drawing attention to Marco’s ethnographic details, but that the annotator of this manuscript’s idiosyncratic interest in oceanography led him to use the *Book* in a different way.⁴⁸

5.4.1.3 England

All the English manuscripts of Marco’s *Book* that contain significant ethnographic marginalia date from the fourteenth century, though in one instance (BL, Arundel 13) much of the readerly marginalia probably dates from the following century. The manuscripts containing scribal marginal paratext, Camb., G&C 162/83 and BL, Royal 14.C.XIII, the latter of which derives from Norwich Cathedral priory, and the former of which is almost certainly also of institutional origin, direct their readers’ attention but not their judgement with regard to the text’s ethnographic details. BL, Royal 14.C.XIII features a fairly extensive scheme of marginal paratext.⁴⁹ Of the forty marginal notes added to Book 3 of Pipino’s translation, including notabilia, bracketing and indicative finding notes, twenty relate directly to points of ethnographic detail. As Table 5 (Appendix 3) indicates, the notes demonstrate an intention on the part of the paratext author to draw attention more to customs and practices relating to idolatry than to details of monstrosity or physical difference. Thus this annotator notes neither Marco’s cenoccephali nor his tailed men. The anthropophagic euthanasia of Dragoiam, on the other hand, attracts ‘note this well’ (‘nota istud bene’, fol. 263r). Alongside Marco’s account of subcontinental India, the annotator notes many more details of religious customs and practices than is usual. Alongside the usual annotations of idolatry, cow worship, *sati* and self immolation,

⁴⁷ Ficino wrote an introduction to the philosophy of Plato amongst many other texts on the philosopher. For the context of the debate, see Christopher S. Celenza, ‘Pythagoras in the Renaissance: The Case of Marsilio Ficino’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 (1999), 667-711 (pp. 687-91).

⁴⁸ ‘hic etiam homines sunt habentes capita canina’: fol. 75v.

⁴⁹ Dutschke notes that certain of the manuscript’s marginalia were added before it was rubricated: ‘Francesco Pipino’, p. 716. In places it can be seen that an early set of annotations made in point have been rubbed and/or overwritten in red ink, in a somewhat shaky hand (e.g., ‘pontes’ fol. 221r in Odorico’s *Relatio*). In addition to such notes, there are annotations and, significantly, corrections in a brownish ink similar to that of the text, not inked over in red (see fol. 264r, where the same neat

the annotator notes polygamy (fol. 264r), royal funeral practices (fol. 264r), the practice of sitting on the ground (fol. 264v), and the practice of taking cattle hair to war for good fortune (fol. 265r). The annotations also show a heightened interest in Marco's description of the Brahmans of Lar. The notes 'mendacium' and 'castitas' (fol. 265r) draw attention to their reputed chastity and hatred of deceit, whilst 'bos', 'scutellus' and 'non occidunt animalia' (fol. 265v) remark upon their reputed reverence towards cattle, eating practices and respect for all living things. It is noteworthy, however, that such notes as these are almost wholly unintelligible without detailed knowledge of or close reference to the text proper. Equally, the notes show that although close attention has been paid to many aspects of the piety of the text's ethnographic objects, little attempt is made to direct the moral responses of the text's readers to its ethnographic details.

The scribal paratext to Pipino's third book in Camb., G&C 162/83 incorporates only thirteen annotations, roughly half of which relate to the text's Indian and Indonesian ethnographic descriptions. The paratext author notes features including physical difference and monstrosity, the Brahmans, self-sacrifice before idols and sexual morality. The most significant and unusual feature of this scribal marginal paratext is, however, its incorporation of pictorial signs. In this way, the tailed men attributed to Lambri are identified in the margin with the note 'tailed men' enclosed within a representation of the head of a man ('homines caudati': fol. 77r). The cenocephali are marked with a 'nota', and with an illustration of the head of a dog (fol. 77r). Although most of the annotator's forays into illustration appear to be inspired by textual references to physical difference or monstrosity, the marginal paratext does include one drawing that directs the reader to Marco's account of a ceremony of self-sacrifice carried out before idols.⁵⁰ In this image (fol. 79r), a man is shown, in European dress, holding a long sword against himself. Although the function of the image is clearly to draw the eye to the text it accompanies, its meaning is ambiguous without reference to the text. Like the drawing of a dog's head at fol. 77r, this drawing could function as a finding note only for those who had

cursive adds notes and corrections, each preceded by a dot), and annotations and corrections of similar hand and format in a black or grey-black ink (fol. 242 r-v).

⁵⁰ A further image towards the end of Book 3 attempts to illustrate Marco's physical description of the people of Zanzibar. The drawing of a human head has been shaded to convey the impression of dark skin: fol. 83v.

read the work, and intended to find this specific passage a second time. Its large scale and the care taken in its construction indicate, however, that the paratext-author viewed this passage in the text as especially significant.

As is the case with the Italian manuscripts examined above, the more verbose annotations in English manuscripts are those left by fifteenth-century readers. The later annotator of BL, Arundel 13 takes both an unusual interest in the detail of Marco's ethnography, and an unusually analytical stance in relation to the text. Thus the paratext author not only marks up ethnographic details passed over by many other annotators, such as daily prayer (fol. 31v), washing (fol. 32r) and abstinence from alcohol (fol. 32r), all in Maabar, but also draws attention where possible to purported reasons for these, noting in Maabar not only that people sit on the ground, but that they do so because 'according to them the earth is holy and they will be returned to earth'.⁵¹ Alongside Marco's account of the Brahmans of Lar, the annotator not only remarks upon their strict life, but also links their health and longevity to their great abstinence.⁵² A similarly analytical attitude is also demonstrated by the same paratext author's careful observation of parallels between practices mentioned in Marco's *Book* and accounts in the copy of Odorico's *Relatio* in the same manuscript.⁵³ Finally, the same measured, analytical stance appears to influence the annotator's vocabulary choice when dealing with behaviours that often attract overt moral outrage on the part of other annotators. Thus self-sacrifice in worship and *satī* are passed over without judgement (fols 31v-32r), the dedication of girls to temples is referred to as an 'abominable mistake' ('De puellis ydolis dedicatis et errore nephario': fol. 31v), whilst a relatively mild 'nota errorem' is written alongside both the beliefs of the anthropophagic cannibals of Dragoiam (fol. 30v) and the use of augury by the Brahmans in Lar (fol. 33v).

The more prolix annotations to BL, Arundel 13, then, appear to testify to a reading of Marco's ethnography congruent in many ways with that recommended by Pipino in his prologue. They construct a reading of the text's ethnography in which

⁵¹ 'apud se terra sancta sit et in terra revertentur': fol. 32r.

⁵² The note reads 'gens semper sana quia magne abstinenc[ie]': fol. 33r.

⁵³ For example, he comments upon the similarity between Marco's account of the anthropophagic customs of Dragoiam and Odorico's of Dodyn: fol. 30v.

reasons behind the text's alien customs and practices are as significant as the customs themselves, considering these as evidence of the erroneous beliefs of a people wandering in the 'dangerous darkness'. Such erroneous beliefs are without question viewed as gravely wrong and blameworthy by the annotator, but they are, nevertheless, considered as beliefs and, fundamentally as mistakes on the part of their perpetrators, leaving open the possibility that they could, with the guidance of missionaries that Pipino hopes to inspire with his translation, be corrected. This sophisticated annotator, then, testifies to a fundamentally orthodox reading of Pipino's translation within the parameters sanctioned by its prologue.

5.4.2 Odorico's *Relatio*

In the earliest surviving Latin redaction (*Guillelmi*) and in the large majority of its Latin and vernacular redactions, a significant portion of Odorico's *Relatio* is dedicated to Odorico's account of the martyrdom of four fellow Franciscans at Tana, and of the miraculous aftermath of this event. The text is consequently a hybrid of hagiography, travel narrative and ethnography, making it very different in nature from Marco's *Book*. Odorico's text, then, is overtly multifunctional in intention, a factor that might have been expected to have influenced the attitudes to the text detectable in readers' annotation and marginal paratext. One of the more surprising conclusions to emerge from the examination of manuscripts of this text, however, is, as will be seen, the absence of impact of the *Relatio*'s hybrid status upon the attitude to its ethnography of paratext-authors and annotators, who sometimes demonstrate remarkable readerly agility in their ability to modify their annotation practices as necessary to conform with the generic norms of hagiography or of ethnography.

5.4.2.1 The Italian States

The sole fourteenth-century Latin manuscript of Odorico's *Relatio* from Italy to feature significant written annotation is BN, f. lat. 2584 (see Appendix 3, Table 5).⁵⁴ The writer of the reading direction, marking up this clearly institutional manuscript

⁵⁴ BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170, also an institutional manuscript, features scattered manicules in its vernacular copy of Odorico's *Libro delle nuove*. However, these appear to point to the beginning of certain chapters, rather than to specific details within the chapters. One manicule on fol. 84v appears to be pointing towards Odorico's account of *sati*. BAV, Urb. lat.1013 similarly may feature traces of reading in the form of tiny crosses placed alongside the veneration of the cow at Polumbum and throwing offerings into a lake in honour of an idol in Mabar (fol. 12v; fol. 13v).

for readers' use, employs marginalia in order to supplement the few subdivisions provided by the manuscript's rubrics, introducing the many new locations to which Odorico travels by name and by a memorable feature associated with the place. Polumbum is thus introduced as a place 'where ginger is produced and in the same place the cow is worshipped as a god'.⁵⁵ The marginal annotator's references to cannibalism, to the cenoccephali and to nudity are linked to their respective toponyms in the same way, indicating that the paratext author's concern is not to note each significant ethnographic feature, but rather to find a point of interest, preferably of a nature that the reader may mentally 'link' to each place. In this way, such points, often ethnographic, become the defining features of place. The tone in which the details are introduced is, moreover, entirely neutral, suggesting that the authors or commissioners of this institutional paratext considered their intended audience capable of making an orthodox reading of the text unassisted.

The trend towards the use of highly personal symbols in the annotation of manuscripts is continued by the fifteenth-century scribal marginal paratext, completed in red ink, of the Latin manuscript BNC, II.IV.277. Very occasionally, the marginal and in-text symbols added to this manuscript are accompanied by written marginal finding notes in red (see Appendix 3, Table 6). Such symbols are set alongside a variety of noteworthy elements in the texts including, in mainland India, *satī* and self-sacrifice. Once again, however, the lack of written notes in this manuscript not only makes the paratext difficult to interpret, but also suggests that it would not have been helpful for directive purposes. The single written note pertaining to the text's ethnography points to the same conclusion. Positioned alongside Odorico's account of the idol of Polumbum that demands the blood of forty virgins, the note reads 'sacri idoli' (fol. 78r). As no explicit reference is made to the main text's bloodthirsty idolatrous ritual, it is difficult to see how this note would have been of use to a reader seeking out this particular practice, rather than any other mention of idols in the text.

⁵⁵ 'ubi nascitur zinziber et ibidem adoratur bos tamquam deus': fol. 120v'.

5.4.2.2 The Francophone continent

French language manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio*, like their counterparts of Marco's *Book* do not generally feature significant marginal paratext or readers' annotation.⁵⁶ The two surviving Latin copies of the work from this region examined (Glasgow, Hunter 458 and Paris, BN, f. lat. 3195), copies of probable institutional provenance, both contain marginal paratext.⁵⁷ Hunter 458, however, in which scribal notes are few, has also been supplemented with a far more extensive programme of readerly marginalia in a later freehand that may be of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.⁵⁸ Interestingly, in both cases, approximately half the annotations touch upon ethnographic details in the text, both annotators noting cannibalism, *satī*, self-sacrifice before idols and other idolatrous practices.

The marginal paratext of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century copy of the *Relatio* in BN, f. lat. 3195 shows a significant bias towards annotating ethnographic detail, wonders, and preferably both. Given the woeful geographical imprecision of this manuscript's rubrics (which do not, for example, distinguish Tana, Polumbum and Mabar from one another), the annotator's decision not to employ marginalia to clarify the progress of Odorico's itinerary is significant. By contrast, he carefully notes practices such as washing with cow urine in Polumbum (fol. 20v), *satī* (fol. 20v) and self-sacrifice (fol. 21r). In relation to Lamori (Sumatra), however, the annotator shows an unusual interest not just in ethnographic details, but in explanation. Here, the notes not only pick out the fact that the men and women there go naked, but also include a manicule pointing to Odorico's reported explanation of their reason for this, that 'they said that God made Adam naked and I wished to clothe myself against the will of God'.⁵⁹ Such an interest in explanation would appear to indicate a posture of detachment from the text. The notes direct the

⁵⁶ Only one French language manuscript with possible (but sparse) fifteenth-century annotation survives in BN, f. fr. 1380.

⁵⁷ On palaeographical grounds, Dutschke identifies the section of the composite BN, f. lat. 3195 that contains Odorico's *Relatio* as originating in France. Though the manuscript also contains a Marco Polo, it is not certain that the two items were bound together at an early stage: Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', p. 428-30. Chiesa identifies the manuscript as fourteenth to fifteenth century, and a *Brevior* recension (A3): 'Per un riordino', p. 323. Its most significant abbreviation is the loss of the Tana martyrdoms episode.

⁵⁸ The two levels of annotation in the *Relatio* in Glasgow, Hunter 458 contrast strikingly with the lack of scribal marginal paratext and readerly marginalia in the copy of Marco Polo's *Book* in the same manuscript.

⁵⁹ 'dicebant deum adam fecisse nudum et ego me contra velle dei volebam vestire': fol. 21r.

reader to observe certain of its features, but in no circumstances interpolate moral judgements, even in the face of cannibalism, self-sacrifice and *satī*, the customs that most regularly attract marginal censure.

By contrast with the type of response and interpretation embodied in the annotations of BN, f. lat. 3195, those of the probably fifteenth-century readerly annotator of Glasgow, Hunter 458 sometimes take a high-handed, rather derisory attitude to the peoples, customs and practices discussed in Odorico's text. Thus alongside Odorico's account of self-sacrifice before idols in Maabar, he notes the 'folly of those who kill themselves saying that they cut for their god'.⁶⁰ The interpretation present in the marginal annotation alongside Odorico's account of the people of Dodin, the oft-condemned alleged practitioners of anthropophagic euthanasia, is, however, surprising. In addition to providing an unembellished, non-judgemental marginal summary of Odorico's ethnographic account, the annotator writes alongside Odorico's explanation for the behaviour of this people (that they cannot allow flesh to putrefy and create worms that would subsequently die) 'note the spurious reasoning' ('nota falsam rationem', fol. 121r). The annotator's decision to condemn this particular custom on the grounds of reason, rather than on moral grounds indicates not conventional disapproval of unchristian practices, but an exceptional attempt at intellectual engagement with the beliefs attributed to Odorico's ethnographic objects.

5.4.2.3 England

I have already discussed in 3.3.2 above how, in England in particular, the diffusion of Odorico's *Relatio* appears to have been related to the publicising of the account of the Tana martyrdoms. In many cases (such as Camb., CCC 407, BL, Arundel 13, Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 in particular), the authors of the scribal paratext and readers' marginalia that adorn such an unusually high proportion of these manuscripts have extensively annotated the martyrdom account, and, in so doing, have treated it as a piece of hagiography. The easy transition, however, between marginal paratext relating to the text's hagiography and marginal paratext discussing the work as a travel account, indicates the flexible, multifunctional nature

⁶⁰ 'nota stulticiam eorum qui se [o]ccidunt dicentes quod pro deo s[uo] incidunt': fol. 116v.

of this text in the eyes of its medieval readers, a multifunctional nature that allowed the work also to act as a repository of ethnographic information.

Camb., CCC 407, Camb., G&C 162/83, Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib. Digby 166 all contain Latin versions of Odorico's *Relatio* augmented by marginal paratext that notes ethnographic details. Of these manuscripts, by far the most significant and interesting patterns of marginal scribal paratext are those added to Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, both, as has been outlined in 3.3.3.2, manuscripts in which the *processus* of the Tana martyrdoms is of great importance. In each case the martyrdom, death and miracles of the four Franciscan friars are meticulously annotated in the margin by the author of the scribal paratext.⁶¹ Any expectation that an interest in promoting hagiography on the part of the paratext-authors of Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 and Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 may coincide with a morally condemnatory standpoint with regard to the practices of Indian peoples is, however, confounded by the comparatively measured nature of the many notes on ethnographic details that follow the martyrdom account. In both manuscripts, customs and practices tend to be noted with precision, without moral censure, and in a manner that would aid readers to find specific passages in the manuscript again. Thus faced with the text's report of the people of Lamori (Sumatra) who hold everything — including women — in common, the scribal annotator of Bodl. Lib, Digby 11 notes 'how women are held in common', whilst that of Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 simply notes that 'all things are held in common'.⁶² In a very few instances, indeed, the annotator of Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 appears to use his authoritative position to neutralise certain judgements made in the main text. Whereas Odorico's main text classes *sati* as an 'abominabile' custom, the marginal note refers to it only as a 'wondrous custom' ('mirabile consuetudo', fol. 39r). The same annotator, moreover, introduces Odorico's account of self-sacrifice before idols in Maabar with the neutral note 'concerning the manner of worshipping the idol' ('de modo adorandi ydolum', fol. 39v), showing a most unusual desire to frame Odorico's account in abstract and indeed apparently neutral terms. In addition to such neutral annotation,

⁶¹ Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fols. 45r-48v; Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fols. 36v-39r.

⁶² 'quomodo mulieres positae sunt in communi': Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, fol. 50r; 'omnia communia': Bodl. Lib, Digby 166, fol. 39v. There are a few notes partially illegible because cropped or rubbed in Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, which may have once contained a condemnatory word. However, the absence of

Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 stands out in appending to its text one straightforwardly approving note relating specifically to a royal custom. At the point where the main text of the manuscript describes the island of Salan (Sri Lanka), and its jewel-filled lake, in which the king allows the poor to dive twice per year, and to keep their findings, the annotator, apparently approving of such generosity, extols ‘the generosity of the king’.⁶³

The marginal paratext-authors of Bodl. Lib, Digby 166 and, to a lesser extent, Bodl. Lib, Digby 11, then, present Odorico’s ethnographic accounts with normally moderate, even-handed paratexts. Such unusual manuscript presentation demands explanation, but, in view of both manuscripts’ lack of established provenance, only hypothesis is possible. If, as their layout suggests, both manuscripts belonged to religious houses with a scholarly strength —and possibly, as has been suggested by Ker for Digby 11, English Franciscan houses — it is possible that the authors of the scribal paratext felt sufficiently sure of the orthodox interpretative capabilities of the manuscripts’ prospective reading communities that to direct their reading in a moral or exegetical way seemed unnecessary. Given this secure, orthodox audience, the texts could safely be presented as scholarly works of information concerning the present state of the peoples of India and the East. Rather than being presented as vehicles for moralising or for the construction of a disgusted, pitying or condemnatory Christian self, details are thus presented as facts to be noted, using forms of notation that enable them to be easily located on a first or later reading. In fact, these remarkable paratexts appear to present Odorico’s ethnographic accounts as items worthy of scholarly study for their own sake. And, when presented as an authoritative, scholarly work by a paratext of scholarly type, the text becomes just that.

Fifteenth-century English manuscripts of the *Relatio*, and particularly those featuring scribal or readerly marginalia are rarer than those of the previous century. The extensive probably fifteenth-century readers’ annotations to the fourteenth-century copy of Odorico’s *Relatio* in BL, Arundel 13 are therefore as unusual and remarkable as those pertaining to the copy of Marco Polo in the same manuscript

any marginal judgements concerning self-sacrifice, *sati*, cannibalism and euthanasia supports my argument irrespective of this possibility.

(4.3.2.3).⁶⁴ The detailed attention that the later annotator of BL, Arundel 13 pays to Odorico's ethnographic accounts is extraordinary in that he notes more customs in greater detail and with greater subtlety than any other scribal or readerly annotator of the *Relatio* that I have encountered. The paratext relating to *satī*, for example, is unique in paying attention not only to the custom itself, but to the lack of a parallel custom for men on the death of their wives, adding 'note that a man is not obliged to die with his wife'.⁶⁵ The annotator also wishes to draw attention to the text's explanations for customs and practices. Thus the reason given for the king of Sri Lanka's custom of allowing his subjects to fish for precious stones, 'in order that they pray for his soul' is noted alongside the custom itself.⁶⁶ The notes, then, are sufficiently detailed to act as finding aids, and yet they also attempt textual exposition.

A review of the ethnographic annotations to the *Relatio* in BL, Arundel 13 suggests, moreover, that the interpretation of the text that the annotator chose to set down, like that of the Marco Polo in the same volume, is in accordance in several ways with the instructions for approaching ethnography set out in Francesco Pipino's prologue to his translation of Marco's *Book*. Alongside Odorico's account of the self-punishment of pilgrims in Maabar, the paratext-author adds an ambiguous note that may hold an implied rebuke to lax Christians. The note 'how they make a pilgrimage to this idol and what pain they suffer in pilgrimage', appears neutral in tone.⁶⁷ It draws attention, moreover, to a point of similarity between the annotator's Latin Christian world view and that which Odorico observes on the Indian subcontinent. Because pilgrimage, and to suffer hardship for the sake of a pilgrimage, is laudable and pious, this annotation appears to testify to a reader comparing pilgrimage practices in his own country to those of the text's ethnographic objects, and perhaps noting, as does Francesco Pipino, that his fellow Christians show less zeal in their 'worship of the true God' than 'infidel peoples' show to their idols.

⁶³ 'benevolentia regis': fol. 40v; *SF*, I, 17, 454.

⁶⁴ The manuscript features two annotating hands, but only the later annotates Odorico's *Relatio*.

⁶⁵ 'nota quod vir non te[net]ur mori cum uxore': fol. 42v.

⁶⁶ 'ut pro anima sua orent': fol. 45r; *SF*, I, 17, 454.

⁶⁷ 'quomodo peregrinantur ad istud ydolum et quam penam sustinent in peregrinatione': fol. 43r.

Whilst the later annotator of BL, Arundel 13 avoids direct condemnation of Indian pilgrimage, in several other instances it evinces reactions of shock and disgust in the margins alongside references to idolatrous practices. Indeed, the author's opprobrium moves him to the extent that it is possible on occasion to witness the reading position of the paratext author in relation to the text shift from that of reading annotator to authoritative moral commentator. This can be seen in the paratext's summary of a later section of Odorico's account of the annual festival attributed to Maabar, that is so reminiscent of the festival of Lord Jagannātha (Puri). The note alongside this episode contains an exhortation to 'note how the foolish people throw themselves under the cart in which this idol is carried and thus die lacking in grace'.⁶⁸ The annotation begins by expressing overt contempt for a people viewed as foolish. Switching suddenly, however, from the reading position of a learning student to that of an authoritative interpreter, the annotator is able, in the latter section of the note, to authoritatively explain the moral significance of their behaviour and to expose the state of the souls of the worshippers at their deaths.

This reader's annotations to Odorico's *Relatio*, then, amply demonstrate the remarkable multifunctionality of this work for its English readers. They show the annotating reader passing through a series of positions and states in his relationship with the text. Much of the paratext consists of detailed and careful annotation of the travel account that treats Odorico's ethnographic accounts as expositions of fact, in relation to which the position of the annotator is that of a learner. Occasionally, however, the annotator slips into a more authoritative role of commentator with respect to the text. Such authoritative annotations treat Odorico's ethnography as a site for interpretation, endowing his accounts of Indian peoples with a specifically Christian function and meaning.

5.5 Conclusion

The manuscripts examined in this chapter demonstrate that responses to Indian ethnographies solicited both by the two texts and their variety of paratexts, and attested by readerly notes, are variable and complex. No simple patterns emerge: manuscripts deriving from religious contexts, for instance, do not necessarily present

⁶⁸ 'Nota quomodo stultus populus ponit se sub curru in quo ducitur istud ydolum et sic fatue gratis

more pious and more morally-directed paratexts than vernacular manuscripts more likely to have been in lay ownership. The most clearly-delineated pattern to emerge is the fact that the more complex schemes of marginalia tend to belong to Latin rather than vernacular copies of both texts, and to fifteenth- rather than fourteenth-century annotators. This does not necessarily suggest that those reading vernacular copies were less likely to experience complex responses to the ethnographic details presented in the texts. If they did, however, as members of reading communities not accustomed to annotative reading practices, they would be less likely to attempt to put responses into the format of a written note. The existence of mute symbols of obscure interpretation and of possible medieval origin in certain manuscripts noted in Appendix 3, tables 5 and 6 but not discussed here (such as BNC, II.IV.88 and BAV, Urb. lat. 1013) may well be the sole traces of more complex readerly responses at which we can only guess.

The majority of marginal annotations to the ethnographic details presented by these texts function indicatively. They take the respectful position of a learner towards the text, noting the texts' customs, practices and traits as facts. Only in a few exceptional cases does the annotation take a more unconventional or authoritative position with regard to the text, and instances of this kind tend to date to the fifteenth century (BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641 and BL, Arundel 13). BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641, annotated in a cursive showing humanistic influence, is exceptional in demonstrating a reader of this period responding to or using decontextualised ethnographic details in an idiosyncratic, creative and perhaps even subversive way: that is, in the terminology of Michel de Certeau, 'poaching', from Marco's account of India.⁶⁹

The fifteenth-century English annotations of BL, Arundel 13, though less immediately striking than the notes of Italian origin to BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641, nevertheless testify to the existence of unusual, complex but ultimately orthodox responses to accounts of India. The annotation here works as another vehicle for

moritur': fol. 43r.

⁶⁹ Michel de Certeau applies the idea of 'poaching' to popular reading practices which, he suggests, involve 'despoiling' texts belonging to cultural 'landowners', by using these in unanticipated and unorthodox ways: Michel de Certeau, 'Reading as Poaching', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 174.

expression of attitudes to ethnographic material envisaged by and sanctioned by the texts. The annotator reduplicates and multiplies the conventional moral judgements made in Francesco Pipino's prologue and in Odorico's text, condemning the foolishness of Indian customs, commenting upon the want of grace of their practitioners and on their theological error. I have also suggested that, in one instance, the marginalia suggest Odorico's ethnography to be functioning, as Pipino's prologue suggests, as an admonition to lax Christians. The annotations to BL, Arundel 13 and several other manuscripts of both texts, then, show both texts being treated not just as tools for learning about the world, but as tools of moral education for its western readers.

Many of the programmes of marginalia discussed in this section raise the question of the purpose of ethnography in this period. Are these texts tools that help their readers to learn, for a variety of reasons, about non-Christian peoples, or are they on the other hand elaborate tools for the purpose of readers' self-construction, whether as individuals or as reading communities? The marginalia discussed here suggest that for readers — sometimes for the same readers writing within the same manuscripts — Marco's and Odorico's Indian ethnography functioned in both ways. In this chapter, I have shown many instances of marginal paratext and annotation presenting the texts' ethnographic observations, including physical traits, customs or purported reasons behind customs, as ethnographic fact. In some cases, however, such ethnographic details are detached from the places to which they belong, becoming almost a marginal litany of the wondrous, monstrous and strange. Less frequent but nevertheless, I believe, present, are the instances of marginalia demonstrating that descriptions of Indian peoples can function as mirrors to, or tools for manipulation by, Latin Christian society. The comment by the late-fifteenth-century annotator of Glasgow, Hunter 458 (fol. 116v) condemning the folly of those who say they cut themselves for their god could, for example, be argued to serve the same purpose in a society that condoned and indeed sometimes encouraged the practice of the mortification of the flesh amongst its own ascetics. Equally, the cautiously approving comment relating to Indian pilgrimage practices made by the annotator to BL, Arundel 13 is perhaps intended to encourage its writer or later readers to examine the depth of their own piety. In these responses and others that express

disgust, pity or dismay, moreover, the construction of an observing, analysing, judging and interpreting, reading self or reading community, and the work of rendering the existence of the variety of humanity meaningful to that self or community, is certainly central.

Part III

Reception: The Evidence of Re-use

Chapter 6: From Travel Writing to Geography?

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I return to the notion, raised at the outset of this thesis, that scholars have often characterised the late medieval period as one of stagnation in terms of the development of geographical conceptions and representations of India and the East.¹ This chapter looks at this question in detail using two broad categories of evidence. Firstly, by analysis of instances of re-use it shows that, whilst it may be true that certain high-profile geographical texts omit reference to recent eyewitness accounts of the Indies, many writers between the mid-fourteenth and the late fifteenth centuries not only quoted from and referenced these accounts but, in some instances, attempted to synthesise the information they contained with that from traditional geographical writings and, later, from Ptolemy's *Geographia*. I examine the modes of reception of intertextual elements from travel accounts into these texts in the light of Umberto Eco's observations on modes of re-use. I ask whether the accounts are cited as authorities without alteration, whether and how they are modified to meet expectations, or whether and how they are radically reworked. Secondly, the chapter discusses the re-use of elements from travel account sources pertaining to the Indies in fifteenth-century Italian cartography. Unlike texts, cartographic productions require the cartographer to synthesise elements from different sources on a plane surface. Thus the cartographer must make decisions based on hypothesis, assumption or observation, about the spatial dimensions of the places he represents,

¹ To date, the most significant challenge to this view has come from scholars who, working on the *Book of John Mandeville*, have begun to characterise this complex text as, amongst other things, a geography, allowing them to consider it as a synthesis of eyewitness information with geographical knowledge. Foremost amongst these is Christiane Deluz, who argues for this position in her thoughtful and detailed study, *Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville: Une "Géographie" au XIVe siècle* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, Publications de l'Institut d'études Médiévales, 1988). Whilst this is a polemical position that is certainly worthy of consideration for, amongst other reasons, the focus it places on the generic differences between medieval and modern conceptions of geographical writings, it is nevertheless problematic. Although I do not argue with the notion that *Mandeville* performed some of the functions of a geography for its medieval readers, I have chosen not to place this fictional work, written primarily if not exclusively from an itinerant first-person perspective and containing substantial fictional personal history, as geographical writing in the sense of the generically very different geographical writings discussed in Chapter 1 or in this chapter. I instead intend to discuss it in the context of imaginative literature, in Chapter 7.

and about how best to represent these two-dimensionally. Given, moreover, the limited space available on a map by comparison with the open-ended potential of a text, cartographers deploying new information must prioritise their information. As is the case with the texts in this chapter, the selected maps discussed here are examined with particular attention to their mode of re-use of elements from travel accounts, specifically in order to ascertain the impact that the change in context and form has on the mode of reception of eyewitness elements.

In view of the large amount of possible material for this study, I have inevitably been obliged to work selectively and have proceeded on the basis of case studies. I have selected texts from Italy, France and England, and maps from Italy not on the basis of the extent of their influence, but on the basis of the extent of their deployment of intertextual elements from travel accounts. This selectivity has necessarily resulted in a visible weighting of the chapter's content towards sources of Italian origin. This weighting reflects, however, wider trends in the distribution of reception evidence.²

6.2 Travellers' Indies in cosmological and geographical writings

6.2.1 Geographical writings 1300-1500: broad trends

In Chapter 1, I discussed the types of texts in which geographical writing appeared in the later Middle Ages, focusing in particular on the most influential Latin and vernacular texts: the encyclopaedias, universal histories and *imagines mundi*. Texts familiar in the thirteenth century such as the *Speculum maius* of Vincent de Beauvais and the *De rerum naturis* of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, in Latin, French, and English, and, in French and Italian, the *Livres dou Tresor*, continued to have a pervasive influence throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In England, the wholly traditional *descriptio orbis* that opened the *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden (d. 1364) circulated widely in Latin and English over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, often accompanied by the distinctive 'Higden' style *mappamundi* (1.1.1.2). In addition to the continued re-copying and circulation of these traditional

² See Chapter 1, section 1 for a review of previous work on the re-use of accounts. An exceptional pocket of non-Italian geographical and cartographic work that employs travel-account sources that falls outside the scope of this thesis is analysed in depth by Dana Bennett Durand in *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus of the Fifteenth Century: A Study in the Transition from Mediaeval to Modern Science* (Leiden: Brill, 1952).

sources of knowledge about the world, however, a number of new texts with geographical elements were produced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, some of which also circulated widely. The geographical chapters of the *Dittamondo* of Fazio degli Uberti (ca 1310-1370), a dream vision that contains a survey of the world, are typical of many vernacular productions in their representation of a conventional, simplified, classical East.³ However, the *Flor des estoires de la terre d'orient* of the Armenian prince and Premonstratensian canon Het'um (Hayton) written for Clement V in 1307 with, as is clear from its fourth book, a crusading agenda, showed, by contrast, a modern, political and commercial world. In Het'um's work, which survives in over forty manuscripts in Latin and French, the traditional image of India is almost wholly jettisoned, replaced instead with the practical information that India (presented as single, rather than tripartite) is on the ocean sea, that it is unreachable via the north and is best approached from Hormuz. Seilan, and a variety of other inhabited but unnamed islands are placed to its south.⁴

In the early fifteenth century, the Italian vernacular description of the world of Gregorio (Goro) Dati (1362-1436) became widely popular, often circulating in high-status circles and elegantly illustrated copies. However, the *Sfera* is a fundamentally traditional cosmographical text, containing an *orbis terrarum* that shows very little influence from recent contact with the East.⁵ In addition to such vernacular elegant rather than learned texts, however, several new academic geographical compendia were produced and diffused amongst scholarly circles in the early fifteenth century, some of these under the influence of the *Geographia* of Claudius Ptolemy (fl. AD 127-141), newly translated into Latin by Jacopo d'Angelo in 1406. The impact of Ptolemy's *Geographia* was far from immediate and pervasive, however. Ptolemy's text had no impact on Pierre d'Ailly's *Imago mundi* (1410), which presents an almost wholly traditional image of the world, its Indian

³ The Asian sections of Fazio's geographical summary are heavily reliant upon Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*: Fazio degli Uberti, *Il Dittamondo e le rime*, ed. by Giuseppe Corsi, 2 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1952) I, VIII, p. 25.

⁴ *RHCDA*, II, 111-253; 254-363 (p. 266).

⁵ No edition is available, but the work is discussed in detail by Filiberto Segatto in 'Un'immagine quattrocentesca del mondo: la *Sfera* del Dati', *ANLM:SMSF*, 8 ser, 27 (1983), 147-81. The *Sfera* contains one reference to the Tartars and only very vague details on India: examined in the beautifully illustrated version in BAV, Barb. lat. 4048, with images and verses pertaining to India and the Tartars at fols 17r-18r.

geography taken primarily from Orosius and Isidore.⁶ In the *Compendium cosmographiae* of 1412 the cardinal, though he discusses Ptolemy's newly-translated *Geographia*, nevertheless makes no reference to eyewitness information on the East.⁷ During this same period, Pomponius Mela's *De chorographia* was copied by the French cardinal Guillaume Fillastre at the Council of Konstanz (1414-1418). Fillastre then wrote his own introduction and gloss to it, which attempted to resolve contradictions between Pomponius and other cosmographers, including Ptolemy, and sent a copy of this work to the cathedral canons at Reims.⁸ The works of Pierre d'Ailly and Guillaume Fillastre are, however, clearly scholarly productions, produced for a learned ecclesiastical and monastic audience. Neither scholar, moreover, attributed value to travel accounts in their geographical works. With the exception of the single word 'Katay', for example, added to an epitome of Ptolemy's tables of co-ordinates in Fillastre's work, and appearing at the north-easterly edge of the land on the map that accompanies his tract in his presentation copy, his work contains no information drawn from the travels and discoveries in the East of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁹

The genres of text in which geographical writing was presented in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, then, continued to be widely variable in terms of the language, level of erudition and socio-economic status of producer and audience. Many of these, as the outline survey of key works provided above demonstrates, continue to promulgate an image of India virtually indistinguishable from those presented two hundred years earlier. Thus an anonymous tract printed with the Latin editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia* in Ulm (1486) and Rome (1490) and entitled *De mirabilibus mundi* contains a wholly traditional representation of India and the East, unaffected by the discoveries of the prior two centuries, and indeed almost wholly

⁶ Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago mundi*, ed. by Edmond Buron, 3 vols (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1930), I: *Imago mundi*, 254-68. Buron dates *Imago mundi* to 1410 and the *Compendium cosmographiae* to 1412-1414: 1, 111.

⁷ Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago mundi*, III: *Compendium cosmographiae*, 552-687; [*Le deuxième traité du résumé de la cosmographie*], 690-731.

⁸ Patrick Gautier Dalché, 'L'oeuvre géographique du cardinal Fillastre', *Humanisme et Culture Géographique à l'époque du Concile de Constance autour de Guillaume Fillastre*, Actes du Colloque de l'Université de Reims, 18-19 novembre 1999, ed. by Didier Marcotte, *Terrarum orbis*. 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 293-355 (pp. 295, 305).

⁹ Dalché, 'L'oeuvre géographique', p. 354.

unrelated to the Ptolemaic work with which it is bound.¹⁰ Amongst this large body of varied material, however, there is a varied subset that incorporates information from eyewitness accounts of the East. In many instances these are texts that do not appear to have been widely diffused after their production, and that lack a modern edition or, in some cases, any edition. They are, nevertheless, witnesses to the availability of eyewitness accounts of the East to authors and compilers, and to the extent of authors' and compilers' willingness and capability to select, extract and deploy information from these.

6.2.2 Re-use in context: encyclopaedic texts in Italy

Encyclopaedic texts traditionally formed an important source of geographical information throughout the Middle Ages, but very often were deeply conservative in their presentation of India. The section that follows, however, discusses two very different encyclopaedic texts from the Italian *Trecento* that introduce elements from eyewitness accounts into their descriptions of India. The *Libro di varie storie* of Antonio Pucci was a vernacular text produced by a somewhat populist composer of *ballate* and exotic romances. Domenico Silvestri, by contrast, an encyclopaedist writing, at the end of the *Trecento*, in the circle of Florentine scholars linked to Coluccio Salutati, consciously followed and indeed imitated Boccaccio.

6.2.2.1 Antonio Pucci, *Libro di varie storie*

Compiled in its author's native Florence in the 1360s, the work published under the title of *Libro di varie storie* is now thought to have been intended as the first, historical, part of a three-part encyclopaedia.¹¹ In keeping with the tradition of

¹⁰A. E. Nordenskiöld, *Facsimile-Atlas to the Early History of Cartography*, trans. by Johan Adolf Ekelöf and Clements R. Markham (Stockholm: [n. pub], 1889; repr. New York: Kraus, 1961), p. 12; *De locis ac mirabilibus mundi*, in Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Cosmographia* (Ulm: Holle, 1486), item 3 in volume (unpaginated, with quire signatures) Ch. 3, 'De India et eius mirabilibus', a2r-a2v; Ch. 47, 'De barbaris moribus indorum', c1v-c2r.

¹¹Dutschke, *Francesco Pipino*, p. 1265. Dutschke has basic biographical information concerning Pucci as well as observations on his treatment of Marco Polo's *Book* in its Tuscan translation (pp. 1264-72). Biographical information on the author, a structural study, and a source study of the work are contained in two articles by its modern editor, A. Varvaro, 'Il *Libro di varie storie* di Antonio Pucci', and 'Antonio Pucci e le fonti del *Libro di varie storie*', *Filologia romanza*, 4 (1957), 49-87 and 148-75 respectively (59-60 for its probable encyclopaedic intent). Varvaro's edition of the text appears in *Atti dell'Accademia di scienze, lettere e arti di Palermo*, 4th Ser., 16:2, fasc 2 (1955-56). In his study of the *Libro's* sources, however, Varvaro does not notice Pucci's deployment of certain details that derive from Odorico's *Relatio*. This, to my knowledge, has not been suggested before now.

universal history the *Libro* contains a description of the world, but, more unusually, Pucci draws for this description upon the travel accounts of Marco and Odorico and uses them to modify its traditionally structured *descriptio orbis*, which is situated in the text following a biblical history of the world up to the story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel.¹² However, whilst this section of Pucci's text incorporates data concerning India from Marco's and Odorico's texts, these data are, as will be seen, rarely integrated and reconciled with that which he takes from traditional sources such as Honorius.¹³ The *descriptio orbis* in the *Libro* (Book VII) contains an account of India of the most general and basic nature. Its India is only vaguely localised — in one instance, it is even attributed to Africa — and contains only the most imprecisely-located features, peoples, and provinces: thus, for example, in 'some part' ('alcuna parte') of India the air is healthy and the climate so mild that there are two harvests and two summers.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that, irrespective of his recourse to Marco's and Odorico's accounts, Pucci, in his introduction to India, does not make reference to their schematic divisions of India into the Greater, Lesser, Middle, Inland or other divisions. Instead, following the above brief reference to its distinctive climate, a bald statement that it contains five hundred well-populated cities and trees that never lose their leaves, and a brief statement that an unspecified river of paradise runs through it, the compiler launches into a catalogue of the marvellous and exotic peoples who live 'di là dall'India' ('beyond India'). Although the positioning of this catalogue closely follows the practice of traditional sources such as Honorius Augustodunensis, Pucci also silently incorporates into it excerpts from the list of marvellous and strange peoples in the islands of the East according to the thirteenth-century popular encyclopaedia the *Book of Sidrac*, as well as a few selected elements of ethnographic description from the sections of Marco Polo's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* that relate to India and the islands that they associate

¹² Dutschke has noted that part VIII ('Delle città e contrade e costumi dei tartari', p. 45) of Pucci's *Libro* in its modern editor's divisions contains 129 of the 183 chapters of the main Tuscan version of Marco's *Book*: 'Francesco Pipino', p. 1267. However, the more imaginative and less well-localised uses of Marco's text and, as suggested above, Odorico's *Relatio*, are in part VII, where the *descriptio orbis* begins: Pucci, *Libro*, 'Delle tre parti della terra', p. 33.

¹³ Largely via Brunetto Latini: Varvaro, "Il libro di varie storie" di Antonio Pucci', 50; for his footnotes to the *Libro*: pp. 35-36, 38.

¹⁴ For India listed as a country of Africa, see Pucci, *Libro*, p. 33. The description of India is at pp. 36-38; 'Evi la provincia d'India, che in alcuna parte v'è l'aria sì buona e sì temperata che v'ha due ricolte in un anno con due state': Pucci, *Libro*, p. 36.

with it.¹⁵ Thus following a description of the sciapods, a traditional element in Indian descriptions, Pucci moves on to the ‘island inhabited by people who have heads which are really dogs’ heads, with their ears, teeth and everything’. Pucci’s direct source here may well be the *Book of Sidrac* in its fourteenth-century Tuscan translation: a text that, like Marco’s *Book*, places the dog-headed men on an island far off in the East.¹⁶ From his turn of phrase, however, which echoes the *Book* in its Tuscan version, it nevertheless seems likely that Marco’s dog-headed Andaman-islanders have influenced his presentation of the traditional cenocephali and their habitat.¹⁷

In addition to attributing vaguely-localised or unlocalised marvels that draw on Marco’s and Odorico’s accounts of India to unspecified lands ‘di là dall’India’, Pucci also incorporates, as Dutschke noted in 1992, an edited transcription of sections from Marco’s *Book* into his geographical excursus. Placed in a separate book (Book VIII) following the *descriptio orbis*, Marco’s *Book* is introduced without attribution as ‘concerning the cities, lands and customs of the Tartars’.¹⁸ Pucci’s interpretation of the *Book*, in its entirety, as constituting a description of the lands and customs of the ‘Tartars’ is a further indication, however, of the problem of the text’s presentation but lack of assimilation of geographical information from travel account sources. In this section, some peoples and customs already attributed to lands ‘di là dall’India’ appear once again, in this section either precisely located in their appropriate island, region or kingdom, or misattributed altogether.¹⁹ Moreover, Pucci here also refers occasionally to a wider geographical frame of reference that he

¹⁵ *Il libro di Sidrach*, ed. by Bartoli, pp. 122-23. For brief information on this work ‘no two extant manuscripts of [which] are exactly alike’, see William M. Holler, ‘The Ordinary Man’s Concept of Nature as Reflected in the Thirteenth-Century French *Book of Sydrac*’, *The French Review*, 48 (1975), 526-38 (p. 526)

¹⁶ ‘isola abitata da gente ch’hanno propriamente capo di cane, cogl’orechi e denti e tutto’: Pucci, *Libro*, p. 36.

¹⁷ Pucci, *Libro*, p. 36. Although the Tuscan describes the cenocephali as having the teeth and muzzles of dogs rather than their teeth and ears, the form of the sentence is close enough to suggest direct influence: ‘E tutti quelli di quest’isola àno lo capo come di cane e denti e naso come di grandi mastini’: *Milione*, 168, p. 233. The cenocephali are traditionally associated with India but not with an island (see Solinus, *CRM*, 52: 24). *Sidrac* is an exception, in which a race with ‘faces like dogs’ ‘volti come cani’ belong to one of the vaguely-situated 12000 islands in the ‘eastern ocean’ (‘mare del levante’): *Il libro di Sidrach* p. 123.

¹⁸ Part VIII, ‘delle città e contrade e costumi de’ Tartari’: Pucci, *Libro*, p. 45.

¹⁹ For example, the people of ‘Angaam’ (Andaman) are described as a ‘gente canina’. Pucci mislocates the people Marco reports as eating their sick relatives in Lambri, rather than Dragoiam: Pucci, *Libro*, pp. 72-74; *Milione*, 164, p. 229.

has nowhere introduced or defined: thus, unthinkingly following Marco, he places Var, the division of Maabar that first appears in Francesco Pipino's translation of Marco's *Book*, in an otherwise unexplained 'India maggiore'.²⁰

Pucci's deployment of ethnographic details taken from Marco's and Odorico's accounts amongst his catalogue of traditional, largely human marvels of India indicates that he viewed the provision of ethnographic detail as one of the primary functions of these travel accounts. However, he employs his travel account sources selectively and, on occasion, manipulates his source material freely by interpolating scurrilous details into the reports he uses. Thus, in his description of the many lands 'beyond India' (Book VII), Pucci makes use of Odorico's account of the Island of Lamori (Sumatra) where, according to the friar, 'women are all in common so no man can say this is my wife and no woman can say this is my husband'. Pucci, however, adds a layer of explanation to this custom that is entirely his own and consistent with antifeminist traditions elsewhere exploited by this author, as Varvaro has pointed out, in his *Contrasto delle donne*. In Pucci's interpretation, 'all women are held in common, and they say that it is impossible for a woman to remain content with one man'.²¹

As much as his manipulation of source material, Pucci's principles of selection and method of deployment of material from travel account sources is informative concerning the status and function of these accounts for him. In his catalogue of the marvellous peoples 'beyond India', Pucci uses, as I have noted above, elements from Latini's *Tresor*, *Sidrac* and travel accounts. His method of weaving these sources together is most instructive. In one instance, the *Libro* incorporates, from *Sidrac*, a people who worship the sun and moon and who, when they wish to sacrifice themselves, invite their friends to a feast. They leap on the table, make a pyre, and set fire to themselves whilst offering themselves to a named idol. Certain of their companions, moreover, prompted by affection, accompany the sacrifice to his death

²⁰ Pucci, *Libro*, p. 73.

²¹ 'In ista contrata omnes mulieres posite sunt in comuni, ita quod nemo est qui dicere possit: "Hec est uxor mea, hic est maritus meus": *SF*, I, 12, 445; 'tutte sono comuni e dicono ch'è cosa impossibile che la femina stea contenta a uno': Pucci, *Libro*, p. 38; For Pucci's uses of material he takes from the *Milione* for (possibly comic) antifeminist purposes, see Varvaro, 'Antonio Pucci e le fonti', p. 152.

and comments that ‘thus they go together straight to the house of the devil’.²² This is immediately followed by a second account, also from *Sidrac*, of a mode of worship in which the devotee uses a mechanical apparatus to cut off his own head.²³ Both these stories, however, have certain similarities of motif with accounts of forms of worship found in Marco’s and Odorico’s texts. The detail, in the first narrative, that companions accompany the suicide to his death is reminiscent of Marco’s account of the loyal companions who accompany the kings in Maabar to their funeral pyres.²⁴ Likewise, *Sidrac*’s description of a worshipper crying out his desire to die for the love of his idol before self-decapitation, clearly echoes practices attributed to Maabar in both Marco’s and Odorico’s texts.²⁵ Shortly following this, in a passage whose sources have not been identified by the work’s modern editor, there appear some details that, though unlocalised, almost certainly derive from Marco and Odorico: the people who disdain to marry virgins, and the land, treated above, where women are in common.²⁶ In his discussion of the lands ‘beyond India’, then, Pucci appears to work associatively, being drawn from *Sidrac* to the works of modern travellers by a perception of a fundamental similarity between certain details from both sources, a similarity that reinforces the authoritativeness of both, but that is in fact artificially created by the choice of details presented.

The manner in which material from Marco’s and Odorico’s accounts of India is deployed throughout Pucci’s description of the world makes it very clear that the assimilation of geographical information from the former into the latter is a low priority. The function of the rather more highly-prioritised ethnography in the text is, moreover, questionable. Rhetorically, Pucci claims to use all his ethnographic details

²² ‘così se ne vanno insieme diritti a casa il diavolo’: Pucci, *Libro*, p. 37.

²³ *Il libro di Sidrach*, p. 124.

²⁴ *Milione*, 170, p. 238.

²⁵ *Milione*, 170, p. 239; *SF*, I, 7, 444. Marco’s *Book* includes an account of condemned criminals sacrificing themselves by multiple cuts with knives. Odorico’s *Relatio* includes an account of a ritual in which the devotee cuts off sections of flesh and throws them before the idol. The similarity of the accounts with *Sidrac* lies particularly in the attribution in all cases of direct speech in which the devotee states that he offers himself for his idol. It seems likely in these instances that the presentation of self-sacrifice before idols in *Sidrac* may have, directly or indirectly, influenced the presentation of rituals by the two travellers or their amanuenses. The wording of the Franco-Italian *Divisament*’s description of the men of Lambri who ‘have a big tail more than a palm long and they are not hairy’ seems, however, to suggest knowledge of and argument against *Sidrac*’s account of men who have tails ‘lunga d’uno palmo e grossa d’uno dito’, who are ‘tutti pilosi’: *Divisament*, 169, p. 547; *Il libro di Sidrach*, p. 122.

²⁶ Disdain for virginity at marriage is attributed to Tibet by Marco: *Milione*, 114, p. 151.

to encourage his readers to examine their own behaviours by noting that although many foreign customs ‘would seem strange to us’, ours ‘appear no less novel customs than theirs do to us’.²⁷ Conversely, however, the opinion, attributed to the people of Lamori, that women are held in common there because ‘they say that it is an impossible thing that a woman be satisfied with one man’, is an interpolation that functions to reinforce in its readers a belief concerning women commonly professed within the writer’s own society.²⁸ In these instances, then, the *Libro* can be seen to force its redeployed ethnography to perform two anthropologically contradictory functions simultaneously. It is used both to underscore the radical difference between his own society and those ‘others’ presented, whose customs are ‘so strange to us’, as ‘ours’ would be to them, and to support the notion of universally similar human traits and behaviours across different cultures.

The redeployed elements from eyewitness travel accounts of the Indies in Pucci’s *Libro di varie storie* function, then, in different and contradictory ways. In part VIII of the work an unattributed rather carelessly summarised epitome of Marco’s *Book* is incorporated wholesale without regard for geographical specificity. Elsewhere, in Book VII of the work, ethnographic details pertaining to particular peoples are divorced from their original geographical settings and recontextualised amongst the traditional marvels of India that can be traced, via Solinus, back to Pliny and to his Greek sources. By recontextualizing such details, without attribution, amongst those taken from traditional sources, the *Libro* assimilates the former with the latter, presenting the two as generically similar. Finally, Pucci sometime silently alters his citations, remaking the eyewitness ethnographic accounts of Marco and Odorico to meet particular moral and didactic requirements.

6.2.2.2 Domenico Silvestri, *De insulis et earum proprietatibus*

If Pucci’s vernacular *Libro* is geographically careless and ethnographically inventive in its pattern of re-use of Marco’s and Odorico’s texts, those texts produced in the

²⁷ ‘E di molte altre terre e genti con nuovi costumi v’ha, che a noi parrebero favole, ma state molto certi che dicendo ne’ paesi istrani da noi di nostre usanze e costumi, che pare a loro non meno nuova usanza e costumanza la nostra che a noi la loro’: Pucci, *Libro*, p. 39.

²⁸ This particular generalisation was probably intended to tie into the common western antifeminist belief that women were more carnal and lustful than men. See Alcuin Blamires’ introduction to his edited anthology, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.1-15 (p. 5).

more scholarly environment of late-fourteenth-century Florence prove more careful and perhaps also more cautious and hesitant in their use of sources.²⁹ Domenico Silvestri began the composition of the *De insulis et earum proprietatibus* in the 1380s, heavily influenced by and with the intention of continuing Boccaccio's *De montibus*, a work that sought to harmonise and locate references to geographical features mentioned in classical sources.³⁰ Silvestri departed from Boccaccio's example, however, both in drawing on information from the moderns as well as the ancients, and in the purpose that he envisaged for his work. Thus in the 'prefatio' to his work, he expresses a desire to produce a volume on islands 'for the use of readers', which sets out information concerning the properties of islands 'in popular and familiar words and not in those languishing in quiet disuse, but those suitable to business'.³¹ As a professed aim this is particularly interesting, because it appears to suggest, in contradiction to the complex and stylistically classicising Latin of his preface, that Silvestri wishes his work to bridge the gap between bookish geography, whose purpose is to provide an aid to readers, and Roger Bacon's concept of a geography that is useful for the business of the world.

In spite of this stated aim, however, the attitude that Domenico professes towards his eyewitness authorities is ambivalent. In his preface, he cites Odorico's authority on the subject of the number of islands under the rule of the Tartars, only to explicitly reject Odorico's authority and exclude his islands from the *De insulis* on the grounds that 'to mingle amongst the histories ancient authorities the fables of new authors, who have not altogether been approved in our time, would only

²⁹ In her recent monograph *Culture et savoirs*, Bouloux has carried out a detailed study of the geographical output of Boccaccio, Petrarch, Domenico Silvestri and his close contemporary, Domenico di Bandini di Arezzo. Domenico di Bandini's massive encyclopaedia, the *Fons memorabilium universi*, also makes use of eyewitness travel accounts but cannot be discussed here for reasons of space. Bouloux's discussion of the impact of accounts of the East upon this circle is intentionally limited: Bouloux, pp. 171-74. Dutschke's discussion of Domenico largely relates to his biography and to identification of the version of Marco's text he employed, which she suggests is a Tuscan version: Dutschke, pp. 1272-82. See also Marica Milanesi, 'Il *De insulis et earum proprietatibus* di Domenico Silvestri (1385-1406)', *Geographia antiqua*, 2 (1993), 133-46.

³⁰ Bouloux, *Culture et Savoirs*, p. 17; Silvestri's text, which survives in only one badly-damaged manuscript marred by many copyist's errors, is unfortunately available only in a flawed edition by C. Pecoaro, *De insulis et earum proprietatibus*, *Atti dell' Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Palermo*, 4th series, 14 (1953-54), 1-319 (p. 29). Criticisms of this edition, corrections to certain mistranscriptions and to certain misidentifications of sources are given in the review of P.G. Ricci in *Lettere italiane*, 8 (1956), 332-36.

³¹ 'ad usum legentium'; 'popularibus et usitatis verbis et non quieti otioque pallentibus, sed negotiis convenientibus': Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 29.

diminish belief in truth by means of untruth, no matter how truthful may be those things that Odorico writes'.³² Indeed, once he has discredited Odorico because of his status as an untested modern, Silvestri seems to find it necessary to justify using Marco's *Book* at all. To do this, he adduces both the *viva voce* evidence of a certain Venetian knight called Fantinus, who claimed to have seen many such things in India, as well as the evidence of 'famous authorities', from whose descriptions 'almost all the things that Marco Polo writes' differ little: a claim that, as will be shown, is questionable.³³

Following Boccaccio's plan in his *De montibus*, Silvestri uses the organisational principle of alphabetisation to order his information on islands. This principle, no doubt followed, as Bouloux notes, to enable ease of use for scholarly reference,³⁴ also allows him to elide many cosmological problems that would no doubt have otherwise arisen from his attempt to employ ancient and modern sources side-by-side. As it is, Domenico's organisational principle does not require that he set out a full geographical schema. Thus his presentation of and allusions to cosmology and any wider geographical schema are rare and partial. When they occur, they tend to derive from direct citations, rather than extrapolations, from his source material. Thus, straying from the point considerably in his entry on the island of 'Seylam or Selanche' (Sri Lanka), Silvestri moves on to discuss the nearby mainland of Maabar, which, following Marco, he identifies with 'Greater India'.³⁵ Almost nowhere in his catalogue, however, does Silvestri show that he has extrapolated information concerning the global position of a place mentioned in Marco's *Book*, nor in which region or division of the 'three Indies' it should be placed. A cautious exception to Silvestri's usual rule appears in his entry on Pentayn (Bintan, Singapore), in which, extrapolating from Marco's presentation of sailing

³² 'Quarum [insularum] aliquas posuisssem nisi quod inter veterum autorum historias et fabulas miscere novorum, nec multum nostris temporibus probatorum, nil aliud esset quam mendaciis veritati fidem minuere et quamquam vera essent que Odorigus scribit': Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 30.

³³ 'Quedam tamen que narrat Marcus Polus, in hoc opusculo nequaquam inseruissem, nisi prudentissimus vir Dionisius, Ioannis Nigrus appellatus, Fantinum venetum militem strenuum virum una mecum audisset asserentem se in India ex his multa vidisse'; '[...] quasi omnia que scribit Marcus Polus in multis a claribus autoribus non discordans [...]': Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 31.

³⁴ Bouloux, *Culture et Savoirs*, pp. 217-23.

³⁵ Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 216; 'Major India': *Milione*, 170, p. 235.

directions from his last port of call, Silvestri explicitly locates Pentayn ‘in the Indian Ocean towards the south’.³⁶

In addition, as exemplified in his attitude to Odorico referenced above, to attempting to avoid potential discord between classical and patristic sources and eyewitness accounts, Domenico also evades the responsibility of definitively identifying places and peoples known from classical sources with those discussed in Marco’s account. On one occasion, however, Silvestri does suggest the possibility of a link between Marco’s island of Pentain (Indonesia) and the home of the legendary *Astomi* or apple-smellers, who inhabit, according to Isidore and a long line of prior compilers, a region close to the source of the Ganges:

This is a fairly wild region: there are forests of trees here, from which an odour drops of such wonderful sweetness that perhaps the people here live by the odour alone. Isidore narrates that there is a people near the source of the Ganges who live by the smell of a certain apple alone [...]. I do not know whether they were from this island.³⁷

In order to link ancient and modern here, Domenico attributes to Marco a suggestion that he does not make. Marco’s *Book* simply states that the forests of Pentain are full of ‘legni olorosi’ (‘odiferous woods’).³⁸ In this way, Domenico modifies his eyewitness source in order to bring it closer to what he supposed his intended readers expected to read. In the marvellous East, healthful odours of trees are so much stronger than in the West that their properties may be wondrous. It is significant, however, that Silvestri only puts forward the suggestion, before denying his competence to make a positive identification.

The tendency of the *De insulis* to either suppress or fail to acknowledge areas of discord between his eyewitness and his classical sources extends to Domenico’s re-use of ethnographic source material. In the case of Andaman, for example, he quotes Marco’s description of the dog-headed men, but reinforces this by noting that Isidore attributes a race of barking cenocephali to India, asking the rhetorical

³⁶ ‘in indico mari sita versus meridiem’: Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 181; ‘quando l’uomo si parte di Locac e va .d. miglia per mezzodie si truova un’isola ch’à nome Pentain’: *Milione*, 160, p. 225.

³⁷ Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 13; ‘Hec [Pentayn insula] satis silvestris est regio, arborum nemora sunt ibi distillante ex his odore mire suavitatis ut forte solo odore vivunt. Narrat Isidorus in India prope fontem Gangis gentem esse qui solo odore cuiusdam pomi vivunt [...] Si ex hac insula essent ignoro’: Silvestri, *De insulis*, p. 181.

question, ‘and if we believe him, why should we not believe Marco the Venetian?’.³⁹ Silvestri does not, however, highlight the disparities between Marco’s islanders and Isidore’s mainland-dwelling cenocephali, who bark like dogs.⁴⁰

Domenico’s re-use of eyewitness accounts, then, is directed towards harmonising the eyewitness descriptions of the world that he considers worthy of credence with those of ancient authorities. To achieve this aim, he is ready to suppress details of divergence on ethnographic and geographical matters. His primary concern, moreover, with regard to the ethnographic details that he relates is not so much to comment upon or even to condemn practices that diverge from those of western Christendom, but rather to provide authority for the likelihood of the existence of such practices with reference to ancient authorities. In so doing, he assimilates Marco’s eyewitness information with that of ancient authorities.

6.2.2.3 Giovanni da Fontana, *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*

From the early part of the fifteenth century, the intellectual landscape of scholars interested in cosmology in Italy came to be dominated by the rediscovered and newly-translated *Geographia* of Ptolemy (see 6.3), as well as the rediscovery and promotion by prehumanists and humanists of other classical cosmographical works such as Pomponius Mela’s *De chorographia* and, later, Strabo’s *Geographia* (in Florence by 1439 and translated into Latin in 1459).⁴¹ Although ancient, these newly-available sources had the attraction of novelty lacking in the already ageing texts of Marco Polo and Odorico da Pordenone by the later fourteenth century. In addition, these classical sources and their translations tended to employ a more classical and more elegant Latin prose style than the workmanlike text of Francesco Pipino, and certainly than the vulgarised Latin of Odorico’s amanuensis. Thus the

³⁸ *Milione* 161, p. 225; Dutschke suggests that Silvestri probably employed the earliest Tuscan version of the text: ‘Francesco Pipino’, p. 1282.

³⁹ ‘et cui si credimus, cur Marco Veneto non credemus?’: Silvestri, *De insulis*, 38

⁴⁰ Isidore, *Etym*, 2, 11: 3,15.

⁴¹ Marica Milanesi, ‘La Geografia di Claudio Tolomeo nel Rinascimento’, *Imago mundi et Italiae: la versione del mondo e la scoperta dell’Italia nella cartografia antica*, 2 vols, ed. by Luciano Lago and Marica Milanesi (Trieste: La Mongolfiera, 1992), I, pp. 95-104 (p. 98); For Pius II’s geographical interests see John Larner, ‘The Church and the Quattrocento Renaissance in Geography’, *Renaissance Studies*, 12 (1998), 26-39.

1461 work of Pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini), *Asia*, contains no reference to the information on Asia to be found in Marco's and Odorico's accounts.⁴²

The little-known, rarely discussed encyclopaedic synthesis known under the title *De omnibus rebus naturalibus quae continentur in mundo* was produced in this context of increased interest in geographical texts and cartography, as well as that of increased confusion caused by the proliferation of texts that set out incongruous views of the world. *De omnibus rebus* does not survive, as far as is known, in manuscript, but only in a sixteenth-century printed edition attributed to a certain Pompilius Azalus.⁴³ Lynn Thorndike, however, has presented conclusive arguments that the work as printed in 1544 is an unaltered treatise from about 1450 written by a Venetian engineer trained in the liberal arts and medicine named 'Giovanni da Fontana' (Giovanni di Michele da Fontana).⁴⁴ The work was badly re-fitted for its mid-sixteenth-century context only by the addition of a new preface attributed to Pompilius and dedicating the work to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.⁴⁵ The lack of surviving manuscripts and of a known pre-1500 imprint suggests that this work, in several places clearly addressed to the author's son, did not enjoy a significant level of diffusion in its author's lifetime.⁴⁶ Although it was not widely-diffused or influential, Giovanni's compendium is a significant witness to the mid-fifteenth century reception in Venice of accounts of travel in the East.

Giovanni's encyclopaedic compendium, though not unusual in form, is distinctive in content and style. The work begins with the age of the world and questions of physics and cosmology (Book 1, fols 1r-34r), moves through

⁴² There is no modern edition of this work. I have referred to *Cosmographia Pii papae in Asia et Europa eleganti descriptione* (Paris: Godofredus Torinus Bituricus, 1509).

⁴³ *Liber Pompilii azali placentini de omnibus rebus naturalibus quae continentur in mundo videlicet Coelestibus et terrestribus necnon mathematicis et de angelis motoribus quae coelorum* (Venice: Scoto, 1544).

⁴⁴ Although Giovanni does not name himself in the work, he refers to Giovanni da Fontana's treatise *De trigono balistario* as his own. He also refers to events of around 1450 as contemporary, and discusses masters known to have taught at the University of Padua in the 1420s as his own masters. His presence at Padua is confirmed by university records: Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vols 3 and 4: the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (London: Columbia University Press, 1934), 4, 150-63, 152-55; 157. For a biography and known writings, see Marshall Claggett, 'The Life and Works of Giovanni Fontana', *Annali dell'Istituto e Museo di storia della scienza di Firenze*, 1 (1976), 5-28, with notes on the *Liber* at 21-22. His name also appears, in records and criticism, as 'Giovanni da Fontana' and 'Giovanni di Michele'. I use the commonly-employed 'Giovanni da Fontana' throughout.

⁴⁵ Thorndike, *History*, 4, 150.

⁴⁶ Thorndike notes an address to 'fili mi' on fol. 31v: Thorndike, *History*, 4, 153.

astronomy and astrology (Book 2, fols 34v-89v) and the four elements (Book 3, fols 67v –89v) before moving on to the form of the world (Book 3, chapter 30, fols 86v-88v), its habitability, divisions into climes and regions (following Ptolemy: Book 4, fols 89v-105r), and ending with a final book incorporating a description of the *oekumene*, its parts, its peoples, flora, fauna and stones.⁴⁷ The text, then has much in common structurally with some much earlier broadly cosmographical texts, such as Honorius's *Imago mundi*. Following his discussion of the regions of the world (largely in Book 4), Giovanni goes on to categorise (in Book 5) and discuss natural and man-made features of the world into thematic groups including the four elements, plant life, animal life, minerals, and the forms and customs of men. The work functions, in fact, as concise cosmography and encyclopaedia, organising its material first according to geographical, then according to thematic principles.

The range of sources that Giovanni draws upon for his cosmological and geographical information is unusually broad, incorporating the recently-rediscovered and translated *Geographia* of Ptolemy, scientific sources ranging in date from Aristotle to Sacrobosco, the eyewitness travel accounts of Marco and Odorico, and the account of Giovanni's contemporary, Niccolò de' Conti, though possibly in a format that no longer survives.⁴⁸ Giovanni not only uses all these texts however: he sets them up in dialogue with one another. Thus when he discusses the question of the inhabitability of the region that directly underlies the equatorial zone, and of the

⁴⁷ Thorndike's chapter on Giovanni also contains a good structural overview of the work: *History*, 4, 150-63. The *Liber* has been subject to very little recent scholarly discussion elsewhere: see Randles, 'Classical Geography', p. 37 and Alexander Birkenmajer, 'Zur Lebensgeschichte und wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeit von Giovanni Fontana (1395?-1455?)', *Isis*, 17 (1932), 34-53.

⁴⁸ From forms of toponyms and similarities in phrasing it seems likely that Giovanni utilised Pipino's Latin translation of Marco's *Book* and one of the Latin versions of Odorico's *Relatio*. The information that Giovanni attributes to Niccolò de' Conti is particularly interesting, however, as it contains certain details that occur neither in Poggio Bracciolini's redaction of Niccolò's account nor in the report of Niccolò's Spanish travelling companion for part of the journey, Pero Tafur: Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435-1439*, trans. by Malcolm Letts (London: Routledge, 1926). The most extended of Giovanni's additions are legendary material relating to Sri Lanka (fol. 123r; fol. 128r), certain of which also occur on Fra Mauro's contemporary Mappamundi (see 6.3). This indicates either that, as contemporaries in Venice, Giovanni and Niccolò met, and that Niccolò and Fra Mauro met, or that an alternative account of Niccolò's travels to that recorded by Poggio was in circulation in his home city. Giovanni also attributes a report of a lake with the capacity to turn base metal into gold to Andaman (Adama, fol. 121v) whereas Poggio simply terms Andaman 'the Island of Gold' ('Andamania, hoc est Auri Insula') without explanation: Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 94. The same feature is attributed to Andaman and, possibly, Lamori by Fra Mauro. See *Il mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, ed. by Tullio Gasparrini Leporace (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1956). References to this edition are to plate and legend number, and quotations give only the text, without Leporace's symbols for abbreviations, line breaks and so on: 14: 36 ('Lamuri') and 14: 39 ('Andaman').

habitability of lands below the equator, Giovanni uses Ptolemy's *Geographia* and the evidence of recent trading activity to argue against Sacrobosco, and specifically his espousal of the idea of an uninhabitable torrid zone separating northern and southern hemispheres (1.1). Traders bring back to 'us', he points out, goods from the region between the supposed torrid zone and the far south, and thus it is by no means entirely uninhabited.⁴⁹ Moreover, as Ptolemy says, half of Taprobane lies under the torrid zone, and several other islands lie to the south of the equator (fol. 92v). He comments, moreover, that Taprobane 'indeed is now called Salien', identifying the Taprobane of the ancients with the Sri Lanka of contemporary travellers in a move that, as will be seen (6.3) is extremely unusual, if not unique, for its time.⁵⁰

Unlike Domenico Silvestri, who wrote approximately eighty years earlier, Giovanni's text identifies, explains, and attempts to resolve a number of conflicts between his sources.⁵¹ Although he clearly admires Ptolemy's *Geographia* and considers it the fullest available treatment of the world, he nevertheless notes conflicts with his other sources. Giovanni struggles, for example, to reconcile Marco's account of multiple islands in the Ocean Sea to the east of Southern China with Ptolemy's depiction of an enclosed southern ocean:

For from Middle India there is a passage to many islands towards the eastern sea, which Marco and others call the ocean, except that Claudius the Alexandrine, from whom we take most of the inhabited world, says that all the eastern boundaries of all Asia are *terra incognita*. But one of these [alternatives must be the case] for the sake of agreement between authorities. Either it is the case that that sea called the navigable eastern ocean is not truly an ocean: that is to say, beyond the land mass [i.e., *oekumene*], but is within the boundaries of the eastern land mass, just as the Indian Southern Sea, which many still call ocean, is within the limits of the eastern land mass; or, out of an opening or openings that exist there or that have broken [into] in that unknown eastern region from the

⁴⁹ 'Nec est omnino illa zona inter torridam et extremam Australem inhabitabilis ex quibus insulis et partibus ad nos deferuntur': [Giovanni da Fontana], *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*, fol. 90r.

⁵⁰ Taprobane 'nunc vero Salien dicitur': fol. 92v. In fact, Giovanni insists that the region of the earth under the equator is 'a more temperate and healthful habitation than all the other regions of the earth' ('temperantior et salubrior habitatio omnibus aliis regionibus terrae': fol. 92r), and situates the terrestrial paradise there: fol. 92r-v. The possibility that the terrestrial paradise lay under the equator was, though not an orthodox view, not unheard of amongst theologians: Wright, *Geographical Lore*, p. 262.

⁵¹ Thorndike notes also his resolution of the pseudo-Aristotelian idea promulgated in the *De sphaera* of Sacrobosco (briefly, that the eccentric spheres of earth and water mean that the earth's opposite hemisphere is covered in water) with the existence of land in the southern hemisphere by suggesting that the entire west of the globe was submerged in the ocean: Thorndike, 'An unidentified work by Giovanni da Fontana: *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*', *Isis*, 15 (1931), 31-46 (pp. 38-40).

ocean, great water has come, that could be called an ocean. However, we have not striven overly to ascertain this, for no-one may verify it except by sight.⁵²

Unable to place Marco's many eastern islands within Ptolemy's schema, in which the known world and the great Southern Ocean in it are bounded by land, Giovanni instead suggests modifications to Ptolemy's schema as shown in Figure 1 (see 6.3). The islands that Marco discusses must, then, either be situated within the eastern limit of Ptolemy's map and thus within Ptolemy's great closed southern sea (but not present on his map), or, violating Ptolemy's schema, he suggests that there may be, to the east, an inlet through which the Ocean Sea that still, in his view, exists outside Ptolemy's limited *oekumene* may wash into Ptolemy's closed Southern Sea. Giovanni's willingness to set up a dialogue between Ptolemaic theory and eyewitness sources on this question is significant, as is his willingness to modify Ptolemy's conceptions on the evidence of an eyewitness traveller.

In addition to making use of the accounts of recent travellers for geographical information, Giovanni's *Liber*, like Pucci's *Libro* of nearly a century earlier, makes significant re-use of many ethnographic details found in its travel account sources. Giovanni departs from Pucci, however, in the considered and highly-developed schema that he sets out to help his reader to understand the ethnographic information he includes. Firstly, in Book 5 of his work, Giovanni categorises his ethnographic material in thematic chapters whose preoccupations show a remarkably analytical interest in comparative anthropology. Following a general opening chapter ('de differentiis omnium et statura effigie et moribus', 5: 26, fol. 129v), he devotes chapters to categories of human customs, including marriage (5: 28, fol. 132r), behaviour towards the dead and dying ('de observationibus erga mortuos vel

⁵²'Nam a media India transitum ad multas insulas ad mare orientale, quod Marcus et alii oceanum vocant sed quoniam Claudius Alexandrinus, a quo plurima habitabilis orbis accepimus, dicit fines omnes orientales totius Asiae esse terram incognitam. Alterum autem horum est, pro scripturarum concordia: aut enim illud vocatum oceanum mare navigabile orientale non esse vere oceanum extra videlicet fines terrae, sed inter terminos terrae orientalis, ut est mare indicum australe, quod et multi etiam oceanum vocant, aut quod ex hostio vel hostiis existentibus vel anfractibus in parte illa orientali incognita ex oceano maxima aqua, venerit, et dici potuisset oceanum. Hoc tamen non multum scire curavimus, nec nisi per visum quis potest certificare': fol. 120r. Emendations: comma removed after 'media'(l.1) and 'aqua' (l.7); 't' added to 'potuisse', (l. 8). The text's reference to 'Media India' here is confusing, because in Marco's usage this refers to Ethiopia, which Marco clearly situates to the west of mainland India. The reference could be an editor's error for 'maior'. Such an error would be far from unique in this edition, where in one instance 'presbiter Aeneas' is mistakenly printed for what should clearly be 'presbiter Iohannes': fol. 118v.

morituros', 5: 29, fol. 133r), types of clothing ('de vestium differentiis', 5: 30, f. 133v), and the variety of laws and religions ('de diversis legibus, et cultibus deorum' 5: 33, fol. 136v). In addition to carefully categorising human behaviour in this way, in 5: 33 (fol. 136v), which concerns the variety of religious laws under which all peoples of the world live, Giovanni sets out a theoretical framework that his readers can use to help them understand the ethnographic information he supplies. First, he outlines the three 'laudabiles' stages of law according to the traditional theological-historical division deriving ultimately from St. Paul: that of nature, adhered to by our first parents, aided by right conscience; that of Moses, which was better than the first, but not complete, and that of Christ and his grace, the most complete and best which leads to eternal bliss.⁵³ In opposition to this temporally and hierarchically-organised triad, however, Giovanni constructs a parallel hierarchy of 'unworthy laws or observances of men' ('leges vel hominum obseruantiae inlaudabiles'), which lead to the fires of hell (fol. 136v). The first of these is contained in the 'achora' of Muhammad and the second is the law of the idolaters, both of which laws are believed by their followers to lead to a paradise of worldly delights. According to the third of these 'inlaudabiles' laws, however, 'when the body of any man dies the soul dies' ('uniuscuiusque hominis cum corpus moritur anima moriatur': fol. 136v). In support of this tripartite division of non-Christian peoples, Giovanni adduces evidence from his wide reading, including eyewitness accounts of Asia:

In support of this opinion we read that there are men in the furthest islands of Asia almost totally ignorant of every religion of God, who have forsaken doctrine of all good morals, but, living like brute beasts, who neither build, nor are expert in any skill, but wander wild and almost feral in the mountains, woods, forests and deserts, given over to robbery and their bellies. They eat, as we have said, raw meat and fish, and indeed snakes; [they] who, being thus deranged by natural disposition or irrational, are judged, by reason either of their ignorance

⁵³ '[...] recte intellexisti tres laudibiles fuisse leges hominum [...]: primam scilicet naturae, quam iusta conscientia ditabat primorum patrum: verum si non sufficiens fuerat ad salutem bona tamen extitit; secundam scripturae ab clementissimo deo in preceptis Moysi populoque suo iudeorum traditam quae precedente melior fuit, non perfecta tamen, neutra qu[uam] predictarum perducebat ad vitam aeternam; tertiam gratiae, quae merito nuncupanda est integra et optima ad perpetuam beatitudinem dirigens cum Christus verus dei filius eam homines docuerit': fol. 136v. The cases do not agree in the original. I have thus here emended 'secunda' (l. 2) to 'secundam' to agree with 'primam' (l.1) and 'tertiam' (l.4). See Romans, Chapters 2-5.

or vice, to have such an excuse as the ass and the sheep, who do not consider paradise.⁵⁴

Giovanni, then, creates a fully worked-out and apparently original interpretative framework for understanding religious and cultural difference that distinguishes idolatry from what he presents as the senseless irrationality of godlessness, in which state humans, whether through ignorance or wilful sinfulness, do not consider the soul or its afterlife.⁵⁵ The clear sense of degeneracy ('dereliquisse'; 'dementes') in the paragraph is noteworthy: the peoples that Giovanni characterises in this way are, in his schema, not obedient to *laudabile* human natural law, but have abandoned it in favour of animal behaviour.⁵⁶ Somewhat disingenuously, moreover, Giovanni's framework for understanding others outside the temporal-eschatological schema of Christian evolution silently conflates the concept of the uncivilised with the concept of the ungodly, indicating quite how blurred, in his schema, are the lines between religious and ethnographic systems of categorisation.

Giovanni's framework is significant in that it is likely to have directed the responses of his readers to the ethnographic information in the chapters that follow. Apparently designed for the purpose, the framework is able to accommodate the distinctions that the texts of Marco and Odorico make between peoples who, in their opinions, observe some kind of albeit idolatrous religious law, and peoples who, in Giovanni's phrase 'have no legal bounds, but live like beasts'.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ 'Pro qua opinione legimus homines esse in insulis extremis Asiae omnem dei culturam penitus ignorantem, omnium bonorum morum doctrinam dereliquisse: sed ut animalia bruta viventes, qui nec edificant, nec in magisterio aliquo sunt experti, sed in montibus, silvis, nemoribus, desertis silvestres atque ferales vagantur, rapinae et ventribus dediti. Carnes crudas, ut diximus, et pisces comedunt atque serpentes, qui sic dementes a natura vel irrationales sint, vel ab eorum ignorantia vel malitia, talem excusationem qualem et pecus et asinus qui paradisum non spectant habere iudicantur': fol. 136v.

⁵⁵ Giovanni's system of parallel hierarchies appears to be original. Roger Bacon also makes a six-part division of humankind by linking ethnographic criteria with astrological phenomena, but his categories have nothing in common with those of Giovanni: Bacon, *OM*, 1: clvi-clvii; 2, 367-72.

⁵⁶ Albertus Magnus' schema for the classification of beings was predicated upon the notion of degeneracy, which Fernandez-Armesto considers to have been the dominant mode of explanation of cultural difference in the late Middle Ages: Fernandez-Armesto, 'Medieval Ethnography', p. 280. Gerald of Wales, one of the very few medieval writers to articulate a theory of anthropology (an 'order of mankind'), suggests that the wild, pastoral Irish who, in his view, also live 'like animals' are in this situation because they have *not* abandoned the first 'mode of living', indicating an understanding of cultural difference explained by the evolution, rather than the degeneration, of civilizations: Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales 1146-1223* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 176.

⁵⁷ 'leges non habent limitatas: sed bestialiter vivunt': fol. 137v; see *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 14, p. 161. Giovanni does not necessarily stick rigidly to this categorisation, however. Following his summary of the variety of religions that hold the ox in reverence he summarises that their followers 'sunt equidem

In addition to setting out this schema of worthy and unworthy laws, Giovanni often redeploys and manipulates his ethnographic source material in order to create patterns and parallels, and a notion of cosmological balance. He takes from Marco the information that in Lar, which, according to Giovanni is ‘not very far from the province of Maabar, where the body of the blessed Thomas the Apostle is’ there are men called Brahmans who ‘hate lust, untruthfulness, theft, murder, drunkenness, meat and wine’. They are frugal in food intake, chaste, and very healthy, although they are ‘great idolaters’, and practise augury.⁵⁸ Giovanni, moreover, follows Marco’s ‘Abraiani’ with an account of the classical Brahmans of the Alexander legends, appending a description of these that touches upon their good life, their worship of one god, on the fact that they do not need to work, and on their legendary rebuke to Alexander. Giovanni uses this material to form part of a parallel structure. He follows the information on the Brahmans who, traditionally, though not in Marco’s *Book*, belong to the far east of India, with an account, taken from a chapter much later in Marco’s *Book*, concerning the people of Coyal (according to Giovanni, though it is Coilum in Pipino’s text; Quilon), in the west. Giovanni repeats Marco’s assertions that the people of Coilun do not consider lechery a sin, and that they marry within degrees of consanguinity prohibited in the Latin West:

In all the region of Coyal at the limit of the western Indian sea there are most lustful and unchaste Ethiopians, who go naked on account of carnal lust. They take blood relations by birth and even their stepmothers as wives after the death of their husbands; they commit adulteries and deflowerings. They are shameless, and indeed they live for a short time.⁵⁹

bestiales propterea et bovem et alias bestas adorant’, indicating a belief that those who worship the ox are behaving like beasts: fol. 138r.

⁵⁸ ‘in Lae regione quadam Indiae non multum distante a provincia Maabar, ubi esse solet corpus beati Thomae apostoli, sunt homines appellati Braiamini, hi, luxuriam, mendacium, furtum, homicidium, crapulam, carnes, et vinum abhorrent’; ‘idolatrae magni sunt et auguria sectantur’: fols. 129v, 130r; *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 30, pp. 176-77.

⁵⁹ ‘In tota regione Coyal in extremo occidentis maris indi sunt Ethiopes luxuriosissimi et inhonesti, nudi incedentes propter veneream affectionem. Consanguineas cognatas novercas quoque in uxorem ducunt post mortem viri sui, adulteria committunt et devirginationes, inverecundi sunt, ac brevi tempore vivunt’. Emendation: ‘i’ substituted for ‘is’ in ‘inverecundis’: fol. 130r. Neither Marco’s text nor Pipino’s translation make reference to Ethiopians, or to short life, nor do they ever make an explicit link between the custom of going naked and lust: ‘[O]mnes communiter luxuriosi sunt, consanguineas tercii gradus vxores accipiunt et hoc per totam yndiam obseruatur’: *Marka Pavlova*, 3: 31, p. 179.

In this passage, Giovanni sets up parallels between the chaste Brahmins who are traditionally attributed to the far East of India, and the lustful Ethiopians that he places ‘at the limit of the western Indian sea’; between chastity, virtue and health, and lechery and short life. Marco’s description is, then, appropriated, assimilated with authoritative legend, modified and redeployed in a manner that supports the notion of a balanced universe, in which the geographical situation of peoples in the world and their physical and behavioural characteristics are capable of moral interpretation.

Giovanni, then, like the fourteenth-century compilers discussed earlier, uses a range of redeployment techniques in relation to his travel account sources. On the one hand, he pays careful attention to their geography and to the problems that this poses for wider cosmological schemas, such as that of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*. At the same time, however, he redeploys ethnographic detail taken from travel account sources in a way that often incorporates unacknowledged interpretative and even fictive elements into his citations in order to better make a moral point, or to force an interpreter to find a cosmological balance in the geography of the world. Moreover, this complete reworking of his sources, when it occurs, is not unattributed, as it is in Pucci’s account discussed above. By contrast, Giovanni’s *Liber* fruitfully uses the grey area between citation and commentary upon citation to attribute his own ethnographic judgements to his eyewitness authorities.

6.2.3 Re-use in context: encyclopaedic texts on the Francophone continent

With the notable and, as has been indicated in the introduction to this section, problematic exception of *Mandeville’s Travels*, the re-use of travel accounts of India in geographical contexts in fourteenth-century Francophone regions appears to have been a relatively rare occurrence. Other than *Mandeville*, and the Balearic production, the *Catalan Atlas*, given to Charles V of France by Pedro el Ceremonioso of Aragon, texts and artefacts from this region that testify to the assimilation of new geographical and ethnographic information concerning India are few.⁶⁰ The book of natural wonders that survives in Pierre Bersuire’s *Morale reductorium super totam Bibliam* incorporated moralised accounts of certain peoples

⁶⁰ As an Iberian production, the *Catalan Atlas* falls beyond the scope of this thesis. An edition and translation appears in Freiesleben’s *Der katalanische Weltatlas*.

and animals taken from Odorico's *Relatio*.⁶¹ The *Songe du vieil pelerin* of Philippe de Mézières, a later fourteenth-century dream vision that opens with an imaginatively-treated overview description of the world, shows deep unease with modern accounts of the East, offering only the most basic information on Cathay and India.⁶²

In the early fifteenth century, however, under the influence of renewed scholarly and humanistic interest in the geography of the ancient world, cosmographical writing in France enjoyed an increase in popularity. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the French cardinal Pierre d'Ailly produced two cosmographical works in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Pomponius Mela's *De chorographia* reached France shortly afterwards: Guillaume Fillastre copied the work at the Council of Konstanz (1414-18), wrote his own introduction and gloss to it and sent a copy of this work to the cathedral canons at Reims. As Dalché has pointed out, Ptolemy's *Geographia* was already known in France by this time.⁶³

6.2.3.1 The *Livre des merveilles du monde* and the *De figura et imagine mundi ad Renatum*

In addition to scholarly works on geography such as those of Pierre d'Ailly and Cardinal Fillastre, fifteenth-century Francophone regions appear to have witnessed a small resurgence of *descriptiones orbis* aimed at less learned, lay, but nevertheless interested audiences. An early-fifteenth-century *Livre des merveilles du monde* or *Secret de l'histoire naturelle*, which treats the regions and countries of the world alphabetically, survives in four finely-illuminated copies.⁶⁴ One copy of the work,

⁶¹ Riechert briefly discusses Pierre's idiosyncratic usage of Odorico's *Relatio*, noting that for geographical information he primarily uses classical authors, but that he makes use of Odorico for natural phenomena and peoples, which he then subjects to inventive exegetical analysis: *Begegnungen*, pp. 231-32.

⁶² Philippe de Mézières, *Le Songe du Vieil Pelerin*, ed. by G. W. Coopland, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1, 222-26.

⁶³ Dalché, 'L'oeuvre géographique du Cardinal Fillastre', pp. 295, 305, 297.

⁶⁴ The four surviving manuscripts are listed and discussed, with particular attention to their illumination, in *Le "Livre des merveilles du monde" ou "Secret de l'histoire naturelle", premier tiers du XVe siècle*, ed. by Anne-Caroline Beaugendre (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1992), pp. 80-82. Beaugendre's *Livre* contains excerpts from the text of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale f. fr. 1377-1379 (dated 1427), accompanied by very splendid illuminations taken from BN, f. fr. 22971 (c. 1480). I have used this edition where possible, but because its selections from the chapter on 'India' do not include all the relevant details I require, I quote in my discussion of this chapter from a microfilm of the copy in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale f.fr., 1377-1379, which, dated 1427, is the earliest surviving manuscript, though not the autograph. This large, well-decorated manuscript now divided into three

described by a recent scholar as a ‘geographical-mythological’ compilation, was produced in the circle of and for René I d’Anjou (between 1447 and 1480), whereas an unidentified copy appears to have belonged to the library of the Dukes of Burgundy.⁶⁵ The quality of the surviving manuscripts alone, however, clearly indicates that they were produced for and owned by wealthy people. In addition to this vernacular work a Latin *De figura et imagine mundi* was also produced for René I d’Anjou at Lyon by the Catalan scholar and translator Luis d’Angulo.⁶⁶ Rather more academic in appearance if not always in content this Latin treatise was illustrated with many outline maps and technical diagrams, but also with some rather well-drawn illustrations, specifically in its section on the signs of the zodiac (fols 85-104).⁶⁷ It survives, perhaps due to its less populist nature, only in a single manuscript.

Very different in style, scope and intention from the academic treatises signalled at the start of this chapter, these texts incorporated compilations and translations of information, often of a marvellous nature, relating to the world. Luis de Angulo’s *De figura et imagine mundi*, dedicated, as discussed above, to René I d’Anjou, justifies its existence by means of the traditional justification for cosmography: that the creation provides a means of knowing its creator, as well as by means of one of Francesco Pipino’s justifications for ethnography: that knowledge of the gentiles in the darkness of blindness will cause the reader to give

volumes but originally a single book according to its early pagination, is written by a single scribe in a careful secretary hand. The fifty-five pen, ink and watercolour illustrations, one of which opens each chapter of the geographical section of the work, have been attributed to the Master of Marguerite d’Orléans. It has been securely dated by means of a now rubbed explicit naming the original owner for whom the work was copied as ‘maistre Renaud (?) [*sic*], marchand demourant a Bourges’: *Livre des merveilles*, ed. Beaugendre, p. 80.

⁶⁵ The Pierpont Morgan Library online manuscript catalogue notes that the René’s arms appear in two miniatures: <http://corsair.morganlibrary.org/msdescr/BBM0461.htm>, p. 4; for the copy in the Burgundian library: p. 3. Beaugendre quotes Jean Porcher’s description of the work as ‘une compilation géographico-mythologique’ of a repetitive, unoriginal nature, yet notes some ten editions between 1504 and 1534: *Livre des merveilles*, ed. Beaugendre, p. 82.

⁶⁶ The location and date are given in its colophon, fol. 139r.

⁶⁷ Luis de Angulo, *De figura et imagine mundi ad Renatum*, unedited. References are to Paris, BN, f. lat. 6561, the only known manuscript (examined on microfilm). This manuscript has been discussed by Ramón Fernández Pousa, from whom I have extracted the following brief details. The work is written on fine parchment in a non-formata secretary hand identified by Pousa as similar to that used in the Salamanca school in the period. It is divided into parts and chapters with rubrication and with regular decorated two-colour capitals in decorated sections of the text and miniatures and illustrations on 59 folios. However, decoration and rubrication are unfinished in parts (e.g. fols 22r-89v), in these instances with guide letters only present and spaces left for rubrics with guide script for these in

thanks for his state of grace.⁶⁸ The work begins its section concerning the division of the earth and its parts with a cosmological discussion taken in part from Ptolemy. However, it soon descends into total cosmological confusion due to its compiler's habit of deploying contradictory information from different sources without reconciliation. Thus, although he claims to take his division of the world from Ptolemy (fol. 16r), Luis nevertheless maintains that the part of the earth directly under the equinoctial line is not habitable, a position not congruent with Ptolemy's cosmography.⁶⁹ In direct contradiction to this, however, he later expresses the opinion that the terrestrial paradise is situated directly under the equinoctial line (fol. 21r), before, in his discussion of the lands of Prester John, asserting that two of the legendary king's regions or islands are situated in the Antipodes, and that a region of India sits on the globe directly opposite England.⁷⁰ Taken from *Mandeville's Travels*, this reference to an inhabited Antipodes implies, in contradiction to Luis' prior assertions, a reachable Antipodes and, thus a passable equinoctial or torrid zone that may sustain human life. When viewed alongside Luis' frequent references to Cathay as an 'insula' (e.g., fol. 39r), these unreconciled problems indicate seams in this cosmography, carelessly patched together from a variety of sources.

Luis makes use of Marco Polo's *Book*, Odorico's *Relatio* and *Mandeville's Travels* in his chapters concerning the East and Asia.⁷¹ However, whilst the work incorporates, without any hint of anachronism, extensive selections from Marco Polo's *Book* concerning Cathay, no information from Marco and very little, largely of a marvellous nature, from Odorico is assimilated into Luis' traditional and legendary representation of India. The nature of the assimilation that occurs is,

margins: 'Una *Imago Mundi* Española : Ludouicus de Angulo : *De Imagine seu figura mundi*, Lion, 1456', *Revista de Indias*, 2 (1941), 39-65 (p. 43).

⁶⁸ 'De quibus omnibus considerando creatura rationalis in admiracionem deducta eleuatur eius intellectu ad perscrutandum ut inde possit venire ad habendum noticiam sui creatoris'. Luis' references to 'gentiles populos tanta cecitatis tenebrositate, tantisque sordibus' and the giving of thanks to God for calling 'fideles suos' into the 'admirabile lumen suum' are direct citations from Francesco Pipino's prologue to Marco Polo (5.4.1). The proem is transcribed by Pousa, pp. 52-54 (p. 52).

⁶⁹ He situates the uninhabitable torrid zone below Ethiopia: fol. 21r.

⁷⁰ 'et habet per terram duas regiones sive insulas que sunt sub pedibus nostris, nam est aliqua pars yndie que est subtus indirecto anglie': fol. 41v. For its source in *Mandeville's Travels*, see Jean de Mandeville, *LdMdM*, ed. by Deluz, pp. 335-36.

⁷¹ His use of Odorico may not be direct, however. From the following discussion it will become apparent that Luis de Angulo's text uses some of the same details from Odorico's *Relatio* as the earlier *Livre des Merveilles*, and in the same way. Further study is required to clarify whether this is due to a common source, or reliance by the later text (Luis) upon the earlier (the *Livre des merveilles*).

moreover, informative. The long list of traditional marvels attributed to India in Luis' chapter 'de diversitate serpentium et aliarum bestiarum yndie' contains, embedded deeply amongst references to the salamander, the monoceros and other marvellous beasts, two unacknowledged references traceable to Odorico's account of Tana. References to mice as large as 'mouse-catchers or cats' and, in the same region, wool from which flame-resistant clothing can be made do not stand out from their context, but rather are perfectly assimilated into it: contextualised as traditional marvels they become traditional marvels.⁷²

The *Livre des merveilles du monde*, unlike Luis de Angulo's *De figura et imagine mundi*, does not, unsurprisingly in view of its generic self-identification as a wonder book, attempt to incorporate academic cosmology into its structure.⁷³ The geographical section of the work divides the earth into places according to alphabetical principles. However, the types of place thus divided often differ: 'Affrique', 'Italie' and 'Tuscane' each receives its own chapter, as does 'Isle', an entry which merely defines, following Isidore, the meaning of the term 'island'.⁷⁴ Vague in the extreme, the *Livre* attributes to India virtually every marvellous feature or exotic custom relating to the entirety of Asia, almost as far west as Chaldea and as far East as Khanbalik (for example, fol. 21r; fol. 19r). Thus Odorico's account of the Biblical land of Hus (Iran/Syria), where men, rather than women, spin, is read as an inversion of norms in which women are the mistresses of men, and the land in which this is the case is relocated to 'the part of India towards the east'.⁷⁵ This would suggest that, in the *Livre des merveilles*, India is an imaginative rather than a geographical space, and its boundaries are drawn round all references to the exotic and strange rather than around a specific geographical area.

⁷² '[...] nascitur quedam lana de qua fiunt cooperture seu indumenta et panni lanei qui durant in igne nec comburentur ab eo. Item inveniuntur in illa regione mures quae sunt ita magni sicut murilegi sicut cati': The section concerned is Part 2, chapters 4-25, fols 17v-41v. India is treated in particular at fols 27v-32v. The monoceros is described at 29r, the salamander and the two Odorican marvels at 29v. Their sources are Odorico's identification of 'mures ita magni sicut hic scerpi (variant: murilegi vero)' and a reference, buried deep in Odorico's account of the Tana martyrdoms, to the protective properties of wool from the land of Abraham, for which see below: *SF*, I, 7, 423. The term 'scerpi' is immensely variable amongst the manuscripts but is often glossed in the manuscripts with terms indicating that a kind of dog is meant: *Cathay*, II, Appendix 1, V.

⁷³ 'Ainsi fine la table des chappitres du livre des merveilles du monde' appears after the original table of contents (in the original hand) in BN, f. fr. 1377, fol. 1r.

⁷⁴ *Livre des merveilles*, ed. Beaugendre, p. 88; p. 45.

The *Livre des Merveilles* incorporates significantly more material from travel accounts concerning India than does the *De figura*: specifically, it includes substantial ethnographic excerpts taken from Odorico's *Relatio*.⁷⁶ In no case, however, does the information provided by 'the moderns' supplant that deriving from traditional sources. In the *Livre des merveilles*, details taken from Odorico's *Relatio* are in fact assimilated with those taken from classical sources. Thus in the course of the work's entry concerning India the compiler quotes from Solinus concerning a wool with fire resistant properties, before linking swiftly to Odorico on what he identifies to be the same subject:

On this subject, Odorico tells in his Book that the ancient Indians held the opinion that a garment that was made from wool from the Land of Canaan, which was from the Land of Abraham, may not be consumed or burned by any fire, and also this doctor says furthermore that those who are clothed in these clothes may not die by fire, because of the power of the wool of which their clothes are made.⁷⁷

Thus the compiler inventively extrapolates a link from Solinus's text to that of Odorico, a link that he forges by attributing — like Luis above — information to Odorico that is simply not in his *Relatio*. In the *Relatio* it is not the 'ancient Indians' who hold such an opinion concerning wool of the land of Abraham: it is, in Odorico's account of the Tana martyrdoms, an erroneous opinion attributed to the Muslim rulers of Tana in order to provide a natural explanation for the supernatural miracle of the friars' preservation on their execution pyres.⁷⁸ In Odorico's text, this wool is not described *per se*, but is mentioned somewhat as an aside: the miraculous

⁷⁵ 'In ea sunt pulcerimi senes, ubi homines nent, id est filiant, mulieres vero non': *SF*, I, 6, 420; 'Item il dit que en Inde en la partie de vers orient en une region appelee la terre Iob il vist que les femmes estoient maistresses des hommes': BN, f. fr. 1378, fol. 20v.

⁷⁶ Luis relies largely on traditional material that derives from sources including Orosius and the Letter of Prester John for his account of India. However, as his reference to the length of journey to the Cathay for Genoese or Venetian merchants and the greater length of that to the land of Prester John makes clear, he had access to a copy of *Mandeville's Travels*. For Luis' paraphrase of *Mandeville*, see Paris, BN, f. fr. MS 631, f. ol. 39r; *Mandeville, LdMdm*, p. 472. It has not been possible thus far to determine precisely which version of Odorico's *Relatio* is used in the *Livre des merveilles*. As Beaugendre notes (p. 84 and n.), there is no close similarity with Jean le Long's French translation. Equally, there is no close similarity with Jean de Vignay's translation: *Les merveilles de la terre d'outremer*, pp. 27-33.

⁷⁷ 'Ad ce propos recite Odoricorus en son livre que les anciens Indois tenoient et creoint par oppinion que la robe qui estoit faict de la laynne de la terre de chanaam qui fut de la terre dabraham ne pouoit par nul feu estre arse ne brullee et si dit encores plus ce docteur que ceulx qui sont revestuz de cestes vestes ne peuent morir par feu par la vertu de la laynne dont sont faictes leurs robes': BN, f. fr., 1378, fol. 17v.

⁷⁸ *SF*, I, 8, 429.

preservation of the Tana martyrs (2.2.2) from the flames of their execution pyres is attributed by the ‘cadi’ (*qādī*) of the town to the virtues of this cloth. Following this artificial link between Solinus and Odorico, the compiler moves smoothly on to recounting other pieces of information attributed by Odorico to India and Indonesia and to Cathay.⁷⁹ Once the compiler has begun to draw upon Odorico’s account of India, he works associatively, moving from topos to topos, only rarely localising the information that he recycles according to Odorico’s eastern geography. Thus in ‘no part of India’ (‘en aucune partie de Inde’) are the dead buried, but rather they are exposed to the birds and beasts; in ‘Polunde’ (Polumbum, Quilon) the ox is worshipped as a God; ‘in that place’ (‘la’) is an idol half in the form of a man and half that of an ox, that must be placated with the blood of forty virgins.⁸⁰

The fifteenth-century French descriptions of the world discussed in this section do not, then, make serious attempts to reconcile traditional cosmology with travellers’ accounts of India. Though apparently unwilling to challenge or substitute the traditional image of India using information from eyewitness accounts, they sometimes, as in the case of the *Livre des merveilles*, suggest an approach to the traditional marvels of India as an open-ended catalogue, to which details may be added from eyewitness sources. The process of selection in these instances is noteworthy, however. Material that has some form of generic similarity with the Solinan wonders is skilfully woven into these in such a way that indicates that it is intended to complement — or perhaps to patch — the traditional marvels.

6.2.4 Re-use in context: English *descriptiones orbis*

6.2.4.1 John of Tynemouth, *Historia aurea*

The pattern of diffusion of travellers’ accounts of India in texts of a cosmographical nature in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England differs significantly from the situation outlined so far with regard to Italy and France. By far the most popular reworking of any eyewitness account of India in this region was *Mandeville’s Travels*, which, after its production in the 1350s, swiftly became available in

⁷⁹ The compiler redeploys far more of Odorico’s material than I am able to discuss in detail here: BN f.fr. 1378, fols.117v-21r. The selection and redeployment process relating to all the work’s sources merit a more extended treatment than they have thus far received: *Livre des merveilles*, ed. by Beaugendre, p. 82.

⁸⁰ Paris, BN, f. fr. 1378, fols, 17v-18r.

England in its original French as well as in English and Latin translations.⁸¹ *Descriptiones orbis* that incorporated the new eyewitness information about India and the East were, however, rare.⁸² Although a variety of encyclopaedic texts incorporating information on countries, cities and islands were available in the 1300s, such as Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum*, as well as *descriptiones orbis* in universal chronicles (most popularly the *Polychronicon*), as discussed in 1.1.1, these rarely attempted to take into consideration information derived from recent travellers' accounts. The exception in this genre that I wish to discuss briefly here is the *Historia aurea* of the English Benedictine John of Tynemouth, a monastic work in the tradition of universal history linked both to the *St. Albans Chronicle* and the *Polychronicon*. The *Historia aurea* survives in its entirety in only two manuscripts, one dating from the fourteenth and one from the fifteenth century, each of which contains, incorporated whole, an abbreviated Latin text of Marco Polo's *Book*.⁸³

In view of the fact that the abbreviated *Book* is incorporated whole into the *Historia*, discussion of John's assimilation of the geography of his eyewitness and traditional sources is redundant. Irrespective of this, there are certain features of the presentation of the work in both manuscripts, however, that are relevant to the study of the reception of its geographical information. Firstly and significantly, the abbreviated copies of the *Book* in these two copies of the *Historia aurea* are two of the few copies of the work to have been furnished with a subject index (see 3.2.3.2). As the *Book* is incorporated into John's text, the index is in each manuscript not a stand-alone index for the *Book*, but rather for the entire *Historia aurea*. It can,

⁸¹ See Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 22-37.

⁸² The only other example that I have been able to ascertain is the mix of excerpts from the *Polychronicon's descriptio orbis* with excerpts from Pipino's translation of Marco's *Book* in Bodl. Lib, Digby 196. In this fifteenth-century miscellany, sections of the *Book* relating to China and to certain Indonesian islands are appended to sections of the *Polychronicon* that treat of similar themes. See for example fol.172r, where sections from the *Polychronicon* relating to islands (treated as a single tract) are followed and indeed complemented by Marco's account of the islands of the Indian Ocean, running from the Islands of Men and Women to his enumeration of the islands of India (*Marka Pavlova*, 3: 37, p. 183 to 3: 42, p. 188). For a description of the manuscript and details of the sections of the *Polychronicon* and other items excerpted in this miscellany, see Macray et al, *BLQC*, 9, 216 and Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 794-800.

⁸³ The fourteenth-century Lambeth MSS 10-12 came from Durham Cathedral Priory and the fifteenth-century Camb., CCC, MSS 5-6, from St. Albans Abbey. See V. H. Galbraith, 'The *Historia aurea*': p. 385 and John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), pp. 103-05. The text compiled in these cases is very close to that of the abbreviated Latin version in CUL Dd. 8.7.

nevertheless, provide information about the material the indexer thought relevant for or useful to its monastic readers. It is interesting to find, therefore, that items of interest in the *Book* are rarely indexed geographically by relevant place names, but, instead, thematically. Thus whilst the index can help an interested reader to locate under the term ‘men’ ‘men with tails in the mountains of Lambri’ (‘homines caudati in montibus lambri’) at fol. 10, or ‘men of the region of Var kill themselves for the love of their gods’ (‘homines regionis Var pro deorum amore seipsos occidunt’) in the same place, it does not enable the reader to look up Lambri, or Var, or India.⁸⁴ In the few cases where the indexing functions on geographical principles it allows the reader to look up specific features, rather than specific places. Thus the islands of Seilam (Seillan, Sri Lanka) and Madeigascar (Madagascar) are found indexed under ‘Insula’.⁸⁵

In addition to the information relating to function provided by the indexing of this text, the two complete copies of the *Historia aurea* also, perhaps, testify to a change in attitude to and function of the *Book* over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The *descriptio orbis* in Lambeth 10, the fourteenth-century *Historia aurea* deriving from Durham Cathedral Priory, is entirely traditional. Like the *descriptio orbis* in the *Polychronicon*, and much like that in Honorius Augustodunensis’ frequently-copied *De imagine mundi*, it begins with a description of the sea that encircles the world and an account of paradise, before discussing Asia. India, the first part of Asia to be dealt with, is bounded by the rising sun to the east, by the ocean to the south, to the west by the Indus, and to the north by the Caucasus (Lambeth 10, fols 1r-2r). Following this, the description covers the healthfulness of the land, its jewels, its remarkable plants, and several of its peoples, focusing either on monstrous features or unusual customs (fol. 2r). In short, in the Durham copy of the *Historia*, the geography of Asia and description of India are little more than highlights from traditional geography. Though included in the *Historia*, information from Marco’s *Book* is incorporated into the body of the chronicle under 1252, the year in which, according to the version of the text copied, the elder Polos set out for

⁸⁴ Camb., CCC 5, fol iv. A brief examination indicates that the way that the index functions and the entries relating to Marco’s *Book* appear to be substantially similar in both manuscripts. Due to the poor quality in these sections of the microfilm of the Lambeth MS to which I had access, however, I only quote entries from CCC 5 here.

⁸⁵ CCC 5, fol v.

Constantinople.⁸⁶ Thus Marco's *Book* is, in this early version of the *Historia aurea*, treated principally not as a source for cosmological or geographical information, but as a historical account.⁸⁷

In the fifteenth-century version of the *Historia aurea* contained in Camb., CCC 5, however, the presentation and projected use of Marco's information changes. Moved from its situation in John's thirteenth-century history, the abbreviated *Book* is instead placed in the *descriptio orbis* at the start of the chronicle, following on from the *Historia*'s description of Media (fol. 2r). The type of information contained in Polo's text, however, remains unchanged. The chapters are broken up into only the most vaguely-defined geographical units with headings such as 'Iterum de regionibus orientis' (Ch. 9, fol. 2v, concerning Greater Persia) and 'Iterum de insulis indie' (Ch. 24, fol. 10r, concerning Indonesia and Sumatra).

Whereas, then, in the fourteenth-century version of the *Historia aurea*, Marco's *Book* is presented and contextualised primarily as a source of material of historical interest that needs have no impact on the established world picture of the chronicler and his audience, by the time that the fifteenth-century copy was produced, the same information appears to have been viewed as of primarily geographical significance. Thus the *descriptio orbis* was modified to include the new information. The impact of Marco's account was limited, however. Though Marco's *Book* is appended to the *Historia aurea*'s *descriptio orbis*, the disparate types of information the two sources contain are not reconciled, nor are their contradictions highlighted. Thus the extent to which the information presented in Marco's *Book* modifies the traditional image of India presented in the *descriptio* is questionable. The two sources of information are treated by the compiler as if deriving from different orders of reality, and there is no indication of assimilation between the two. The usefulness, furthermore, of the subject index to the text presented at the beginning of each surviving version is noteworthy here. Whilst in both cases the

⁸⁶ Lambeth 12, fol. 195r. According to the version of Pipino's translation edited by Prásek, this date is 1250: *Marka Pavlova*, 1: 1, p. 6.

⁸⁷ The precedent for such treatment of eyewitness travel accounts is Vincent de Beauvais' inclusion of John of Planocarpini's *Historia mongolorum* into the *Speculum historiale*. Vincent de Beauvais, *SM*, IV: *Speculum Historiale*, 29: 69-89. Early medieval precedents for this inclusion of up-to-date geographical information into historical and not geographical sections of works are cited by Lozovsky, *The Earth is our Book*, p. 141.

Book is indexed using the manuscripts' contemporary foliation, in neither case could this index function as an aid to geographical research.

6.3 Travellers' Indies in fifteenth-century Italian cartography

6.3.1 Context

Although there is evidence of cartographic activity that integrates information from ancient and modern sources in the fourteenth century — most notably the Catalan Atlas of Abraham Cresques — survivals of this nature are few, and beyond the scope of this thesis.⁸⁸ Instead, this section discusses specific trends in mapmaking that developed in northern Italy in the early fifteenth century. The maps in this tradition show the influence of a varied range of sources, including but not limited to eyewitness travel accounts. Even to select a small number of maps from this source pool provides, however, a potentially vast area for discussion.⁸⁹ Consequently, this section addresses specifically the way in which the selected maps work out conflicts and establish compromises between three diverse types of cosmological information: traditional cosmology, the new cartographic method and geographical information provided by Jacopo d'Angelo's 1406 Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, and the information relating to India provided by travel accounts.

Although this thesis is not directly concerned with Ptolemy's work, the *Geographia* is nevertheless of significance in the impact that it has on the reception of eyewitness travel accounts in cartographic sources. Ptolemy's work brought with it a new interest in and attitude to cartographic representation that combined fascination with the novel with the authority of the ancients. Its innovation was, as Milanesi has explained, to use a system of co-ordinates to anchor locations on the earth to points in the heavens, and thus to achieve a means of representation that

⁸⁸ The so-called Catalan Atlas was produced for Pedro el Ceremonioso of Aragon in c. 1375 who then gave it to Charles V of France. A fragment of a *mappamundi* of similar style now in Istanbul is discussed by Marcel Destombes in *Mappemondes A.D. 1200-1500* (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1964), no. 52 (pp. 203-05). The drawing of maps in France and England in this period appears to have been in stasis, with traditional *mappaemundi* commonly being recopied without reference to new information: see Harley and Woodward's general survey of cartography in the period: *History of Cartography*, I, pp. 286-337.

⁸⁹ For the maps produced in Italy in this period see the comprehensive catalogue of Destombes, *Mappemondes*, and K. Lippincott, 'The Art of Cartography in Fifteenth-Century Florence', in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, ed. by M. Mallett and N. Mann (London: Warburg Institute, 1996), pp. 131-49. An excellent contextualising survey is also provided in Angelo Cattaneo's *Il Mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, pp. 97-176.

transcended the subjective.⁹⁰ In the words of the work's translator, Ptolemy 'has brought it about that the situation and places of this earth, which is the humblest and least of the elements, are joined to individual regions of the sky'.⁹¹ In this way, a world map could be projected onto a plane surface (Fig. 1: all figures appear at the end of the chapter) and regional maps treating each continent section by section could be produced. My concern is not, however, with Ptolemy's representation of India via this new mode, nor even with its reception, but rather with the dialogue that Ptolemy's *Geographia* necessarily enters into with traditional cosmology and information taken from eyewitness travel accounts, and how, in relation to India, the conflicts that arise from this dialogue are resolved.

The transitional *mappaemundi* that survive from fifteenth-century Italy occupy a peculiar position in the history of cartography.⁹² In form, they resemble the traditional, probably wall-mounted medieval *mappaemundi* such as the Hereford map.⁹³ Like the Hereford map, many of the world maps produced in fifteenth-century Italy were very large in scale, clearly for display purposes, and featured decoration and images as an integral part of their design. Giovanni Leardo's maps of 1448 and 1452/3 (see Figure 4), for example, place the world in the midst of a visually impressive calendar and set of computational tables, and the 1448 map shows the terrestrial paradise as a beautifully drawn Italian palazzo.⁹⁴ In content, however, the maps differ markedly from the tradition of medieval *mappaemundi*. Unlike the variety of traditional *mappaemundi* that circulated throughout the later Middle Ages, the fifteenth-century transitional maps showed, as will be seen, an

⁹⁰ Milanese, 'La Geografia', p. 97.

⁹¹ 'Effecitque ut huius terre que elementorum infima minima est situm et loca cum celi singulis partibus coniugi': Claudius Ptolemeus, *Cosmographia* (Rome: Bucknick, 1478), preface, fol. 2v. For the world map and the regional plates, see also the facsimile edition with introduction by R. A. Skelton: *Claudius Ptolemaeus: Cosmographia Rome 1478* (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1966). All quotations from and references to Ptolemy are to this edition unless otherwise stated in the notes. References are to Ptolemy's numbered tables, which circulated loose, without pagination, at the back of the volume.

⁹² For the category of transitional maps see Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, I, pp. 296-99.

⁹³ The map is edited and the genre discussed in *The Hereford Map: A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary*, ed. by Scott D. Westrem (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

⁹⁴ Leardo's map of 1442 is now in the Biblioteca Comunale, Verona; that of 1448 is in Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana; the 1452/53 map (reproduced here) is in Wisconsin, American Geographical Society Collection. For this research I employed the facsimile and transcription by Wright, *The Leardo Map of the World*.

open-ended attitude to knowledge about the world, according to which elements could both be added to and removed from maps.

In the section that follows, I focus on four Italian maps from the mid- and late-fifteenth century. The famous mappamundi of Fra Mauro was completed in 1459 (Figures 2 and 3) and is thought to be a copy of a now lost map sent to the royal court of Portugal. Designed by the Camaldolese Friar at his workshop on the Venetian island of Murano, the map was completed after his death in 1459.⁹⁵ Giovanni Leardo's maps, also produced in Venice in the 1440s and 1450s, show elements in common with the more detailed work of Fra Mauro, as well as with the Catalan mapmaking tradition. Of the three surviving world maps drawn by Giovanni Leardo, I discuss only the latest, of 1452/3, which is the fullest of his productions (Figures 4 and 5). The so-called 'Genoese' world map (Figures 6 and 7), a close contemporary both of the Leardo and Fra Mauro productions, shows some interesting differences in shape, style, cartographic principles and sources.⁹⁶ The latest map to which I shall refer is the world map included in Henricus Martellus' *c.1489 Insularum illustratum* (Figure 8). Working in Florence between *c.* 1480 and 1500, the German cartographer Martellus produced a series of maps, probably in conjunction with the engraver Francesco Rosselli, over a considerable period of time. The *c.* 1489 map is of particular interest, however, as it sets out the knowledge available to Martellus in Florence after the wide diffusion, via print, of Ptolemy's *Geographia* and just after the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Destombes, *Mappemondes*, p. 224. I have employed the full-size reproduction with discussion and transcription of the legends in Leporace's edition, *Il mappamondo di Fra Mauro*. Good general recent discussions of the map have been carried out by Woiciech Iwańczak, 'Entre l'espace ptolémaïque et L'Empirie: les cartes de Fra Mauro', *Médiévales*, 18 (1990), 53-68 and Angelo Cattaneo, 'Fra Mauro *Cosmographus incomparabilis* and his *Mappamundi*: Documents, Sources and Protocols for Mapping', in *La cartografia europea tra primo rinascimento e fine dell'illuminismo* ed. by Diogo Ramada Curto, Angelo Cattaneo, André Ferrand Almeida (Florence: Olschki, 2003), pp. 19-48, as well as his unpublished thesis, *Il Mappamondo di Fra Mauro* already cited.

⁹⁶ Although produced for Genoa, the map, referred to in its inscription as *Vera cosmographorum cum marino accordata descriptio*, may have been drawn in Florence: Destombes, *Mappemondes*, p. 223. See also Edward Luther Stevenson, *The Genoese World Map, 1457: Facsimile and critical text*, Hispanic Society Publications 83 (New York: American Geographical Society, 1912), pp. 1, 10.

⁹⁷ I have referred to the copy of the map in BL, Add. 15760. Many of the features that I identify on this copy also occur in a more elaborated form in the engraving of Rosselli (BNC, Landau-Finally Planisfero Rosselli), generally dated to shortly after 1498, on Martellus' planisphere of circa 1492 (Yale University Library) and on Martin Behaim's globe (Nuremberg, 1492): S. Crinò, 'I planisferi di Francesco Rosselli dell'epoca delle grandi scoperte geografiche. A proposito della scoperta di nuove carte del cartografo fiorentino', *La Bibliofilia*, 41 (1939) 381-405 (p. 394); R. Almagià, 'I mappamondi di Enrico Martello', *La Bibliofilia*, 42 (1940), 288-311.

6.3.2 Addressing conflict between Ptolemaic cosmology and eyewitness accounts of the East

By the time the maps of Giovanni Leardo, Fra Mauro and the anonymous Genoese Cartographer were produced in the mid-fifteenth century, Ptolemy's *Geographia* had made a significant impact upon cartographers' oceanography, delineation of coastline and cartographic practices. Indeed, the so-called Genoese cartographer is thought to have employed co-ordinates in the design of his map, though no trace of the system of meridians and parallels is evident in the finished piece.⁹⁸ Of the maps from this period discussed, several reconcile Ptolemaic information with eyewitness accounts by using the Ptolemaic coastline and regional divisions as a framework within which to situate detail taken, though not necessarily directly, from eyewitness accounts of India and the East. The Leardo map of 1452/3, for example, clearly makes use of Ptolemy's coastline and hydrography between the Persian Gulf and the mouths of the Ganges (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 5), as well as certain key inland features. On Leardo's map, for example, Mons Meandrus, a mountain on Ptolemy's eleventh table of Asia (showing extra-Gangetic India) is, interestingly, still placed in the East beyond the Ganges but is lifted from its context and, in a link with the *mappaemundi* tradition, made to serve as a natural barrier preventing passage between a very un-Ptolemaic terrestrial paradise and the rest of the world.⁹⁹ Of the Golden Chersonese and the eastern *Terra incognita* characteristic of Ptolemaic maps there remains no trace on any of the Leardo productions, which retain instead the circular *oekumene* of traditional *mappaemundi*. In addition to the Ptolemaic and *mappaemundi* influences detailed above, however, the majority of toponyms for the coastal regions derive, according to Wright via Catalan intermediaries, from Marco Polo's *Book*.¹⁰⁰

The Genoese world map integrates its Ptolemaic, traditional and eyewitness elements in a way similar to the Leardo maps. The coastline of the east, from the Persian Gulf to the eastern edge of the map, is clearly identifiable as under Ptolemaic influence, although it owes its extended size to measurements taken from Marinus of

⁹⁸ Iwańczak, 'Entre l'espace ptolémaïque', p. 68.

⁹⁹ Ptolemy, *Cosmographia* (Rome, 1478), 'Undecima tabula Asiae'; Wright, *The Leardo World Map*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ Wright identifies affinities with the Catalan Estense map and the Catalan Atlas, as well as noting certain and probable borrowings from Ptolemy: *The Leardo World Map*, pp. 37-39.

Tyre's cosmography, as reported and rejected by Ptolemy.¹⁰¹ As on Ptolemy's world map, from which the Genoese map evidently takes its regional framework for the East, India is divided into 'citra' and 'ultra Gangem', and is bordered to the west by the Indus and Gedrosia. Although the map broadly follows the Ptolemaic framework, however, the detail of cities and regions is taken from eyewitness accounts, but in Asia is confined primarily to the coastline. Ptolemy's peninsula just to the East of the Indus is left blank of modern names, containing only an inscription referring to the practice of *satī*. Coymbaytu (Canbaet, Kanbhāya) is placed in a gulf to the east of this peninsula, east of the position that would correspond with its location using a modern projection. Malabar and Cail (Kayal), taken from Marco Polo's *Book*, are placed in a bay on the far side of a promontory to the east of Coymbaytu. Only Bizengalia (Vijayanagara), reported on extensively by Niccolò de' Conti in the account he gave to Poggio at the Council of Florence, is situated inland, somewhat to the west of the Ganges.

Fra Mauro's *mappamundi* amalgamates a schema taken from Ptolemaic maps with information from known eyewitness travel accounts and other, sometimes unidentified sources in a way that follows the pattern already established by the works of the Genoese cartographer and Giovanni Leardo. Rejecting the use of coordinates in order to produce a traditionally circular map of the *oekumene*, significantly increasing the size of the Asian land mass and intentionally presenting Africa as circumnavigable, Fra Mauro's map makes significant use of Ptolemy's information on Southern Asia and the Indian Ocean, but nevertheless makes attempts to reconcile it with eyewitness accounts.¹⁰² As a result, Ptolemaic influence and nomenclature is almost entirely confined to delineation of coastline and hydrography, both of which features are often hazily and incompletely dealt with by the travel accounts.¹⁰³ Thus the map, following Ptolemy, shows the Ganges flowing

¹⁰¹ A. E. Nordenskiöld, *Facsimile-Atlas*, p. 3.

¹⁰² A study of Fra Mauro's use of Marco Polo's and Niccolò de' Conti's material on Asia is included in Angelo Cattaneo's *Il Mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, pp. 257-92. Cattaneo establishes that Fra Mauro worked from a manuscript of the 'B' family of Marco Polo's *Book* (pp. 264-65). Toponymic citation is one of four modes of re-use of knowledge from travel accounts that Cattaneo identifies on the map. The remaining three are the summary of passages, in particular pertaining to trade or goods; citation via images, sometimes literal; sometimes embodying a creative response: *Il Mappamondo*, p. 259.

¹⁰³ Marco and Odorico's accounts largely treat coastal ports and regions but do not follow the coastline. They do not treat Indian rivers at all. Niccolò de' Conti's account is the only eyewitness travel account that deals with hydrography in any depth. It is noteworthy that Fra Mauro abandons

into a Gangetic gulf, and a southern Indian coastline that runs broadly east-west in orientation, broken with a large gulf termed ‘Colfo di Milibar’ that corresponds with Ptolemy’s Sinus Argaricus.¹⁰⁴ Ptolemy’s coastline is modified in this way in many instances, with ancient names replaced by what Fra Mauro identifies as their modern equivalents, taken from the travel accounts of Marco and Niccolò and also other, often unidentified sources. Thus to the west of Ptolemy’s Sinus Argaricus he locates a gulf (Ptolemy’s Sinus Colchicus) termed ‘chavo de Eli’, a toponym familiar from Marco Polo (Mount Delly). Ptolemy’s Sinus Canthicolpus, into which the mouths of the Indus flow, is replaced with a small indentation rather than appearing as a large gulf. The area to the west of the Indus is termed ‘Mogolistan’, with a nearby legend that explains ‘This province was in the past called Gerdosia’, referring to the Ptolemaic term for the region to the west of the Indus and at the same time drawing a clear western boundary to India.¹⁰⁵ To the east of the Indus, the province of Tana is depicted on a small promontory pointing southward, evidently representing that of Salsette on which it in fact stands, facing an island identified as Diu.¹⁰⁶

The visual and methodological modelling of Henricus Martellus Germanus’ World Map (Figure 8) upon Ptolemy’s map is the most evident of all the maps discussed in this section. Although the world map that appears in Martellus’ *Insularum illustratum* lacks visible scale or projection apparatus (divisions into climata; degree divisions; line showing the equator), it is modelled on Ptolemy’s second projection, but with modifications that allow it to encompass representation of a greater extent of the globe than does its Ptolemaic model.¹⁰⁷ The non-appearance of an equinoctial line, the extreme southward extent of Africa, and the

even the Ptolemaic divisions of India ‘intra’ and ‘extra Gangem’, using instead ‘Cin’ (*Milione*, 157, p. 221), referring approximately to eastern Indonesia and China, and Macin (Poggio, *De l’Inde*, p. 102), referring approximately to the Bay of Bengal and Indonesia and a division between Indias ‘Prima’ to the west, ‘Secunda’ between Indus and Ganges and ‘Tertia’ to the East: *Mappamondo*, plates 19-20 and 14 for Cin and Macin; plates 20 and 21 for uses of India Prima, Secunda and Tertia.

¹⁰⁴ Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 15: 11.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Mogolistan’; ‘Questa prouincia antichamente se diceua gerdosia’: Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 15: 70; 15: 65. A firm identification for Mogolistan has not been established. The region is opposite Hormuz on Fra Mauro’s map and, in the legend concerning Hormuz, is given as 20 miles from there: Ivar Hallberg, *L’extrême Orient dans la littérature et la cartographie de l’Occident des XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles: Étude sur l’histoire de la géographie* (Göteborg: Wettergren & Kerber, 1906), p. 357.

¹⁰⁶ In fact, Tana and the island it faces is just one of the many locations depicted more than once on the map. It is also placed further to the east, opposite an ‘Isola Main’: Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 15: 63 (‘Tanna’), 28 (‘Isola Diu’); 15: 12 (‘Tana’), 24 (‘Isola Main’).

¹⁰⁷ See Johannes Keuning, ‘The History of Geographical Map Projections until 1600’, *Imago Mundi*, 12 (1955), 1-24 (pp. 6, 10-11).

eastern peninsula of Cattigara all serve to indicate that Martellus rejected certain of Ptolemy's calculations concerning the southern extent of the known world and suggested that it extended considerably further than the 20° south of the equator it covers on Ptolemy's map. Indeed, Martellus' circumnavigable Africa, supplemented with detailed information on the continent deriving from Portuguese exploration, extends well south, famously breaking the southern boundary of the map. Similarly modified is Cattigara, the far eastern region that, according to Ptolemy, extends southward and westwards as well as eastwards, encircling the Indian Ocean. On Martellus' map, under the influence of eyewitness travel accounts, this region becomes a circumnavigable peninsula with multiple islands to its east and south instead of the *terra incognita* enclosing the Indian Ocean that it is on Ptolemaic maps.¹⁰⁸

In common with the Leardo world maps and Fra Mauro's *mappamundi*, Martellus' world map employs Ptolemy's delineation of coastline and hydrography as a framework, incorporating also selected Ptolemaic regional and peoples' names. Thus 'India inter gangem et Indum' appears over India proper; 'Catigara' labels the most easterly peninsula shown on the map, and the designation 'Gangaridae', a term that in classical accounts refers to a people who live beside the Ganges, appears alongside the mouths of the river.¹⁰⁹ On its eastern third, Martellus' extended Asia, the map also incorporates details taken almost exclusively from Marco Polo's *Book*. Such toponyms include 'Regnum Lac' (Lar, south of Gujarāt), 'Regnum Coilum' (Quilon), 'S. Thome' (probably standing for the region of Madras/Chennai), 'Varr' (a division of Maabar according to Francesco Pipino), 'Provincia Moabar' (Maabar, the Coromandel Coast) and 'Ciamba' (Champa, Vietnam). The names are placed around the coastline of the land-mass, starting on its west, with 'Regnum Coilum' on the southernmost tip of its promontory.¹¹⁰ The toponyms taken from the *Book* then ascend the eastern coast in the order given above. Alongside 'Provincia Ciamba' (towards the northern half of the map, around the point where the eastern coastline starts to turn north-west) is placed the apparently newly-invented toponym, 'India

¹⁰⁸ Martellus's use and modification of Ptolemy is usefully outlined and contextualised in William A. R. Richardson, 'South America on Maps before Columbus? Martellus's "Dragon's Tail" Peninsula', *Imago Mundi*, 55 (2003), 25-37.

¹⁰⁹ Solinus, *CRM*, 52: 8.

¹¹⁰ Identified, with the exceptions of 'Lac' and 'Varr' in Richardson, 'South America', p. 34.

Orientalis'. Above this, on the north-westward heading coastline, is the 'Provincia Mangi', Marco's term for Southern China. Placed, apparently with general reference, above the Ptolemaic 'Sinus Magnus' that separates the Golden Chersonese from Cattigara is the legend 'in this place John, emperor of all India rules' ('hic dominat Iohannes Imperator tocius Indiae'). To the north, the rule of Cathay is likewise attributed to 'cham major', the Great Khan.

Apparently unable to bring Ptolemaic toponyms and coastline into agreement with those supplied by Marco's *Book*, then, Martellus' map shifts the rather small body of material taken from Marco's account of India to its eastern edge. Martellus' decision to shift Marco's toponyms to the east may be due to the fact that, in Ptolemaic maps, this distant region is only lightly scattered with toponyms. It is also possible, however, that the incomplete information provided by the *Book* itself on the position of the Pole Star in the regions described has some bearing on the change. The *Book* states that Cape Cormorin is the first point in India from which it is possible to see the Pole Star after leaving Java the Less (Sumatra).¹¹¹ However, the itinerary that Marco takes up after describing Sumatra takes the reader to the Maabar, Lar and several other parts of India before moving south to Comari. This meandering itinerary may well have caused confusion regarding the latitudes of these places, with the result that the cartographer understood them to be below the equinoctial line. If Martellus' equinoctial line runs, like that of Ptolemy, through Taprobane, as the degree curving of the meridians suggested by the map's shape suggests, then in order for Coilum, Lac, Varr and Moabar to be placed either to the south of, or directly underneath, the equinoctial line, they must necessarily either be crammed into the most southerly point of the Golden Chersonese or placed in the only suitable large area of free space on the most southerly extension of the land mass on the map: the Cattigara Peninsula, on which they are in fact situated.

6.3.3 The identification of the ancient with the modern: Sri Lanka

The island of Sri Lanka constitutes a useful case study for examining the means employed by cartographers to reconcile ancient and modern toponyms. Many different sources of information were available to cartographers concerning this island. Sri Lanka appears in the popular sources of Orosius, Pliny and Solinus as

Taprobane, an island of legendary plenty and wonder situated, sometimes rather vaguely and sometimes more specifically, in the East. Indeed, its status as a land of legendary wonder is enhanced in Solinus, his source Pliny, and those medieval writers that rely upon these authorities, by their statement that Taprobane was once thought to form part of 'the other world', that is, of another *oekumene*, and was thus thought to be inhabited by the unknown *antichthones*, living in what is essentially a parallel world to 'our' own (1.1).¹¹² In Ptolemy's *Geographia*, Taprobane is no longer so hazily situated, nor so distant, but is located close to the south-east coast of 'India intra Gangem'.¹¹³ Mariners and travellers, however, situated Seillan in this position, close to the Coromandel Coast. The Leardo map of 1452/3 well exemplifies the problems that this variation between sources posed to cartographers. The map shows Taprobane placed far to the east, opposite the mouths of the Ganges, in this instance not following Ptolemy, who places his Taprobane to the south of mainland India opposite Cory Peninsula (Figs 5 and 1). Opposite the place names for coastal ports of mainland India taken from Marco Polo's *Book* and from unidentified, probably oral accounts, Leardo places an island, whose legend is no longer legible, but which is, in Wright's opinion, 'similar in shape to the Salam or Silan' that appears on the Estense Catalan map, with which, according to Wright, the Leardo maps had a shared source.¹¹⁴ The map also, however, appears to feature a third Sri Lanka. The 'Ysola de Ceridus' almost certainly derives, again via a Catalan source, from the Arabic toponym 'Sarandīb'.¹¹⁵ The position of the island of Ceridus, however, far to the east and south in the Indian Ocean, indicates that it may derive from Arab oral reports. Distinct from Arab geographical traditions concerning Seillan and Sarandīb, which were, as Nainar's study of medieval Arab geography of India has shown, precise and politically and economically well-informed,¹¹⁶ Arab legendary traditions concerning Sarandīb often identified it as an inaccessible island

¹¹¹ *Divisament*, 181, p. 580.

¹¹² 'Taprobanem insulam, antequam temeritas humana exquisito penitus mari fidem panderet, diu orbem alterum putaverunt et quidem quem habitare Antichthones crederentur': Solinus, *CRM*, 53:1.

¹¹³ Ptolemy, *Cosmographia*, Decima tabula Asiae. See also Fig. 1.

¹¹⁴ Of the names that probably derive, via a Catalan source, from Marco's Book are 'ianpa' for Chamba, 'Butifilli' for Mutfili, Elli, and a strangely misplaced 'Cormos' for Hormuz: Wright, *The Leardo Map*, p. 39; for the legendless Sri Lanka, see Wright, *The Leardo Map*, p. 47.

¹¹⁵ Probably via a source common to or close to the Estense Catalan map, which has the isle of 'Ceredim' in this location: Wright, *The Leardo Map*, p. 47. For references to Sarandīb by Arabic geographers, see Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge*, p. 237.

of jewels and marvels, featuring many of the motifs of the Latins' legendary Taprobane such as inaccessibility, otherworldliness, and equality of day and night.¹¹⁷ It seems likely, then, that, presented with information about Seilan and Sarandīb, the cartographers distinguished and therefore represented two distinct islands. It seems possible, moreover, that the placement of the latter to the south, towards the edge of the world, is due to legendary influences.

An attempt to reconcile travellers' accounts of Sri Lanka with classical treatments of Taprobane is also detectable in the Genoese world map (Fig. 6). The island of 'Seilana' is situated in a bay of south India, facing 'Cail'.¹¹⁸ Unusually, Taprobane is situated to its west, still close to the mainland, in a position that appears to relate to its location on Ptolemaic maps. The legend attached to this island, however, in which the inhabitants of the island are said to call it 'simicera', indicates that this island is intended to be Niccolò de' Conti's Sumatra.¹¹⁹ The lake that the Genoese cartographer attributes to the centre of the island, not a feature of Niccolò's account, indicates that an attempt has been made to harmonize Niccolò's account with Ptolemy's *Geographia*, according to which such a lake is situated in Taprobane (duodecima tabula Asiae). Thus the Genoese cartographer follows Poggio by identifying Sumatra with Taprobane. On the map, then, Sumatra is somewhat to the west of the position we would expect from Niccolò's itinerary and contains a lake belonging to Taprobane.¹²⁰ The Genoese world map, then, assimilates ancient and modern here by loosely interpreting the information taken from Niccolò's eyewitness account in order to make it better fit a Ptolemaic outline of the East.

Fra Mauro's map (Figs 2 and 3) constitutes a serious, and indeed probably the most famous, cartographic attempt to harmonise ancient and modern sources of the

¹¹⁶ Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge*, p. 237.

¹¹⁷ For the legendary Sarandīb see the sixth and seventh voyages of Sindbad the Sailor, in which it is presented as below the equinoctial line and in which it first becomes accessible to the shipwrecked sailor once he has given up on life: *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, ed. by Robert L Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 168-74. Ibn Battuta uses a cognate of 'Seillan' for Sri Lanka, but 'Sarandīb' to mean Adam's Peak, to which he makes a pilgrimage in order to visit the legendary footprint of Adam at its summit: *The Travels of Ibn Battuta AD. 1325-1354*, trans. by H. A. R. Gibb, 4 vols (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1958-1994), IV, 847.

¹¹⁸ From Niccolò de' Conti's 'Caila' (Kayal): Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 90.

¹¹⁹ 'Taprobanes, quae Sciamutera eorum lingua dicitur': Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 94.

¹²⁰ Poggio's text implies but does not definitively state that Taprobane is East of the Ganges when he stresses the unprecedented distances that Niccolò has travelled: 'Nam et Gangem transiit [i.e., Niccolò], et ultra Taprobanem longissime adit': Poggio, *De l'Inde*, p. 96.

mid-fifteenth century: so much so that the generally anti-positivist cartographic historians Harley and Woodward termed it ‘the culmination of the age of medieval cartography’.¹²¹ Problems nevertheless attend the cartographer’s attempts to make definitive identifications between ancient and modern geographical features in Asia. Fra Mauro’s attempt to make a firm modern identification for the Taprobane of the ancients exemplifies well the nature of these problems. That Fra Mauro rejects out of hand the notion of identifying ‘Taprobana’ with ‘Saylam’, indicating that in his opinion Ptolemy erroneously described ‘only’ Saylam when he intended to describe Taprobane has been noted before.¹²² Instead, Fra Mauro follows Poggio in identifying Taprobane with Sumatra, and keeps faith both with the unity of Niccolò’s itinerary and traditional cosmographers in placing it far in the East.¹²³ The identification of Taprobane with Sumatra was, however, clearly not an easily-settled question, and some indication of confusion and doubt on this subject can be traced in the map’s legend for the island of Saylam. Primarily sourced from travel accounts, Fra Mauro’s long legend discusses the King of Saylam’s legendary ruby, the footprint of Adam, Adam’s Peak, the chains of iron used to ascend it attributed to Alexander the Great, and the supposed longevity of its inhabitants.¹²⁴ It ends, however, with the peculiar comment that ‘these people are commonly called the Salae’.¹²⁵ Without a familiarity with Ptolemy’s map of Taprobane (duodecima tabula

¹²¹ Harley and Woodward, 1, 315. Cattaneo discusses Fra Mauro’s synthesis of ancient and modern sources in *Il Mappamondo*, cited above, but does not discuss Sri Lanka in detail, nor is the island discussed in detail by Pullè in *La cartografia antica*.

¹²² ‘Nota che Tolomeo uoiando descriuer taprobana à descrito solamente saylam’: Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 14: 49; G. R. Crone, ‘Fra Mauro’s Representation of the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Islands’, in *Studi Colombiani*, 3 (1952), 57-64 (p. 59); Iwańczak in ‘Entre l’espace ptolémaïque’, notes a number of examples of Fra Mauro’s doubtful stance towards Ptolemy.

¹²³ ‘Isola siamotra ouer taprobana’: Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 14: 62.

¹²⁴ Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 8: 6. The legendary ruby is attributed to the King of Sri Lanka by Marco Polo and Niccolò de’ Conti. The chains and the mountain of Adam appear in Marco Polo’s *Book* and in Niccolò’s account, but the legend of Adam’s footprint only in Niccolò’s account. The legendary long life of the inhabitants is likely to be another borrowing from traditional accounts of Taprobane: ‘quibus inmatura mors est in annos centum aevum trahunt’, Solinus, *CRM*, 53:12. However, the detail that the mountain is ‘the Mount of Adam’ and the attribution of the chains to the endeavours of Alexander the Great occur in no surviving contemporary western travel account, though they occur in Arabic texts of the same period and earlier (e.g. Battuta, *Travels*, IV, 847-55). The same additional details occur in the contemporary *De omnibus rebus naturalibus* of Giovanni da Fontana, where they are explicitly attributed to Niccolò de’ Conti (see 6.2.2.3). This lends support to a view that has been tentatively suggested by certain scholars, that Niccolò’s report may also have been available in another, perhaps oral form: Cattaneo, *Il Mappamondo*, pp. 288-89; Lynn White Jr, ‘Indic Elements’, p. 219, citing Crone. Further work is necessary on the unidentified sources in Giovanni’s *Liber* in order to illuminate this question.

¹²⁵ ‘Questi populi de sailam comunamente sono dite sale’: Fra Mauro, *Mappamondo*, 8: 6.

Asiae), this comment in relation to Sri Lanka makes no sense. However, according to Ptolemy, Taprobane ‘was formerly called Simondi Island but is now called Salica. Those who inhabit it are commonly called the Salae’.¹²⁶ The inclusion, therefore, on Fra Mauro’s map, of the detail that the people of Saylam are generally called ‘Sale’ indicates that the cartographer or one of his sources at some stage identified Taprobane with Sri Lanka, an identification whose traces were never quite erased from the map, irrespective of the decision, perhaps made later, to identify Taprobane with Sumatra.

6.3.4 The function of the Indies in cartography

The structural principles of certain of these maps, when examined in the light of the cartographic tradition from which they come and in which they are in dialogue, betray deep generic uncertainties. These uncertainties, moreover, sometimes threaten almost to fracture the map form altogether when they are faced with the challenge of eyewitness information. The so-called Genoese world map (Fig. 4), for example, employs a broadly Ptolemaic framework, modified with eyewitness detail. Structurally, however, the cartographer appears unsure whether the map should resemble a sparsely annotated Ptolemaic map or a medieval *mappamundi* like the Hereford map, crowded with explanation, images, and ethnographic detail. Thus alongside selected toponyms from Niccolò and Marco, we also find longer legends of an ethnographic nature, such as a reference to the use of leaves in place of paper in Caila (Kayal), and an account of *satī* near Coymbaytu.¹²⁷ From traditional accounts of India, the cartographer also adds an island in the Ganges, with details of the oversize reeds that grow there.¹²⁸ The selection of *topoi* to represent in this way appears almost random however: the map makes no attempt to be comprehensive either in its inclusion of classical details or of the eyewitness information from Niccolò, but rather employs selected details in order to make associative links between the places represented cartographically and a few, general ideas concerning the Indies.

¹²⁶ ‘olim Simondi insula dicebatur; nunc autem salica qui eam habitant communi vocabulo salae dicuntur’: Ptolemy, *Cosmographia*, Duodecima tabula Asiae.

¹²⁷ Both details are from Niccolò de’ Conti, who makes reference to ‘foliis [...] quibus pro cartis in scribendo utuntur’ in Cail and relates how ‘uxores quoque comburuntur cum uiris’ in Combaita: Poggio, *De L’Inde*, p. 90.

¹²⁸ Solinus, *CRM*, 52: 48.

The Leardo map of 1452/3 and Fra Mauro's map both feature, irrespective of their splendid appearance, indications of hesitation and indecision concerning the functions of their cartographic representations of India. I have shown how, in the case of the Leardo map, the drive towards comprehensiveness, which necessitates the incorporation of information from different traditions of knowledge, leads to the cartographic representation of three Sri Lankas. In fact, this is a necessary result of the attempt to incorporate information from different modes of knowledge concerning the world on a single plane surface. In a sense the map is right: in fifteenth-century cartography there were at least three different Sri Lankas. The West's legendary island, the legendary island of Arab fables, and the busy port of exchange visited by merchants from many parts of the world all normally inhabit different planes of reality, but in Leardo's map are forced cartographically to inhabit the same plane. Similarly, in the far east of the map, surrounded by toponyms taken from travellers, Ptolemy's Mons Meandrus is put to use as part of the barrier that separates the terrestrial paradise from the known world. The map represents the intersection of at least three modes of knowledge concerning the East, and its problems are related to anxieties over the function of cartographic representation of this part of the world. On the Leardo map, the desires to represent a world picture that represents and locates Christian history and eschatology, scientific speculation, and empirical evidence from first-hand observers sometimes sit uneasily together.

Fra Mauro's work has likewise recently been called 'a witness to indecision between the way of understanding space according to the Ptolemaic tradition and other authorities, or according to empirical knowledge of the world'.¹²⁹ Such hesitations are evident in Fra Mauro's descriptions of India and its islands. The map in fact functions paradoxically. It appears to be a statement of knowledge of the world: splendid, complete, clear and apparently packed with information and images. However, this fullness conceals indecision as to which cartographic method to follow and whether or not to accept the authority of eyewitness travellers over authoritative cosmographers when the two sources clash. Indecision is, moreover, suggested by the map's very plenitude of information: place names, descriptions and

¹²⁹'un témoignage des hésitations entre la manière de comprendre l'espace selon la tradition ptoléméenne et d'autres autorités, ou selon la connaissance empirique du monde': Iwańczak, 'Entre l'espace ptolémaïque', p. 68.

elements of legends are often repeated in more than one location on the map. Sometimes such repetitions are identical doubles; on other occasions a feature may be attributed to more than one place, such as a miraculous lake that turns iron to pure gold in Andaman and, possibly, Lamuri.¹³⁰ This combination of indecision, overabundance of legends, and crowding with many images — some of which are, as Cattaneo has shown, imaginatively developed from their sources — throws the function of the map and its representation of the East into question.¹³¹ Its sumptuousness clearly indicates that it is intended to function as an object of pride and of display; the overabundance of sometimes repeating legends suggests that it aims to project an appearance of plenitude of knowledge, even concerning far-off India and the East, and to conceal hesitancy and gaps, in order, perhaps, to project a perhaps exaggerated image of the knowledge, power and influence of its commissioners and owners through the *oekumene*.¹³²

The late-fifteenth-century world map of Henricus Martellus (c. 1489) raises similar questions regarding the function of cartographic representation of the East in this period. Whilst Martellus' famously up-to-date representation of Africa shows influence from the methods of production of navigational charts, his representation of India, Indonesia, South East Asia and the Far East is basic. Like Giovanni Leardo, Martellus attempts to synthesise information not just from differing sources but from different epistemologies: the legendary world of Prester John, the somewhat outmoded *Book* of Marco Polo, and Ptolemaic cosmology. Because the eastern sections of the map rely only upon Ptolemy, a single and outdated eyewitness source, and certain legendary traditions, the map is thoroughly anachronistic in its retention of details concerning Prester John and the Great Khan of Cathay. Given the availability of alternative sources of information in Rome at the time Martellus' maps were designed, this anachronism is extraordinary and certainly suggests that the purposes and functions of this map appear not to have included the spatial

¹³⁰ This lake features in two cartouches on the map: one below and to the right of Lamuri; the other below and to the right of Andaman. It is possible, however, that both cartouches refer to Andaman, upon which a gold circle clearly represents the lake. In any case, the legend is presented twice. Fra Mauro, *Mappamundi* 14: 35 and 39. See also the double presentation of Tana in note 111 above.

¹³¹ For imaginative developments in the images see Cattaneo, *Il Mappamondo*, pp. 279-86.

representation of the Latin West's current state of knowledge of India and the Far East. Like the Leardo map discussed above, Martellus' map demonstrates the intersection of different cartographic modes, modes that include the representation of tradition; the precise location and spatialisation of recently-discovered places, and the speculative presentation of an idealised, modified Ptolemaic *oekumene*.

In their representations of India and the Far East, the transitional maps examined in this section attempt to spatialise a world view that is speculative but inclusive. They continue to localise features such as the terrestrial paradise, the regions evangelized by St Thomas, the lands of Prester John, and those of the Great Khan, as well as adding toponyms from travel accounts, and nuggets of ethnographic detail. In continuing to localise legends on the same plane as their Ptolemaic frameworks and their empirical evidence, these cartographic productions make plain their underlying assumption that the cartography of the East is fundamentally linked to an understanding of history, and the Latin West's formative cultural influences of classical and Christian geography.

6.4 Conclusion: Overview of modes of re-use

Uses of geographical and ethnographic elements from eyewitness accounts of India over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries show a remarkable range of types of redeployment. In texts, the representation of space appears a relatively low priority. The alphabetical organisation of Domenico Silvestri, the thematic rather than toponymic or regional indexing of John of Tynemouth, and the vague and associative method of ordering information about India in the *Livre des merveilles du monde* and of Luis d'Angulo's *De imagine mundi* all successfully avoid the problem of spatialising the knowledge they present and harmonising it with current cosmological thought. Only in Giovanni da Fontana's *Liber de omnibus rebus* do we see the evidence supplied by travel accounts being deployed to modify cosmological theory. On the mid-fifteenth-century maps, some concern can be detected to fill unknown and sparsely-occupied areas of space. Both on maps and in texts, extreme caution can be seen in the compilers' and cartographers' approach to the problem of

¹³² According to one of its legends, the map was made 'a contemplation de questa illustrissima Signoria [di Venezia]': Roberto Almagià, *Monumenta cartographica vaticana vol. 1: Planisferi, carte nautiche e affini dal secolo xiv al xvii esistenti nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), p. 34.

deciding between conflicting ancient sources, and between ancient and modern sources. Indeed, many compilers and some cartographers show a preference for attempting to accommodate all such sources, even when they conflict. Whilst the open-ended textual formats employed make such encyclopaedism possible, the cartographic requirement to produce a two-dimensional synthesis of information makes it inevitable that the final product will approximate a single, unified world view. As I have shown, however, such apparently unified world views often conceal moments of hesitation, indecision and confusion in their presentation of the Indies and the East.

In the presentation of ethnography in the texts discussed above, it is possible to delineate a tradition of moralised human geography. The impetus to draw patterns and meanings from peoples' customs and to relate these to their position in the world is detectable in texts ranging from the 1360s through to the later fifteenth century. Often, the compilers of these geographical texts betray their desire to control and to direct their readers' responses, in particular to ethnography. Parallels and inversions are forced out of texts, if necessary by modification of source material, resulting in its fictionalisation. Readerly scope for heterodox interpretation is, moreover, often limited as far as is possible by more or less obvious methods of authorial direction. Amongst the more interesting of these from the point of view of cultural history is Luis de Angulo's exhortation to his readers, following Francesco Pipino, that, upon contemplation of the blinded nations of the infidels in his *descriptio orbis*, readers will inevitably be moved to thank God for his grace with regard to themselves. In view of the small and selective use that Luis makes of ethnographic detail from travel account sources concerning the Indies, this claim appears hollow and rhetorical. It is far removed indeed from its original context in Francesco Pipino's translation, in which it was followed by an exhortation to members of religious orders reading Marco's *Book* to work amongst 'infidel' peoples where, 'however great the harvest, the workers are nevertheless few' (see 5.2).

Both in texts and upon maps, the mode of re-deployment of intertextual elements from travel accounts tends towards the assimilation of information with details, apparently selected with an eye to their generic suitability, from travel accounts, into what I have called 'traditional' descriptions, compiled from elements from encyclopaedists such as Solinus, from the Alexander legends and the legends

of Prester John. Thus, as is the case with the information taken from Odorico's account of Tana and the Tana martyrs by Luis d'Angulo and the anonymous French *Livre des merveilles*, details taken from travellers' accounts are removed from their original contexts of reportage and, once recontextualised amongst marvels, they become marvels. Instances of re-use in which traditional or dominant knowledge-structures are modified in order to accommodate information redeployed from eyewitness sources are rare indeed. Amongst the texts examined here, only Giovanni da Fontana's *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus* can be argued to function in this way. Giovanni's modification of Ptolemaic cosmology in order to account for the existence of Marco Polo's eastern islands, as well as Giovanni's construction of a set of religious-anthropological categories within which his compendium of ethnographic writings may be read, both result from a unique synthesis of knowledge from a variety of ancient and modern sources.

Once a repeated pattern of re-use, in which novelty is assimilated into the traditional in geographical and cartographic productions, is recognised, several related important questions and problems emerge. Earlier in this thesis (1.3), I alluded to Edward Said's problematic distinction between 'imaginative geography', defined as a mode of discourse through which the 'facts' of a 'positive geography' are distorted, and 'positive geography', the concept, or perhaps rather the Platonic ideal, of a body of disinterested knowledge about place. This chapter suggests, in my view, that in the case of the West's construction of the Indies in the later Middle Ages, imaginative geography precedes 'positive geography' and, in fact, makes the notion of a positive geography an impossibility. In texts in particular, but also to a lesser extent on maps, the long-lived, endlessly shifting and re-forming imaginative geographies of 'India' and 'the Indies', woven together from threads of knowledge concerning the East from encyclopaedic, legendary and historical sources, can often be seen to structure and govern the way that information from travel accounts is read, understood, selected and re-used.

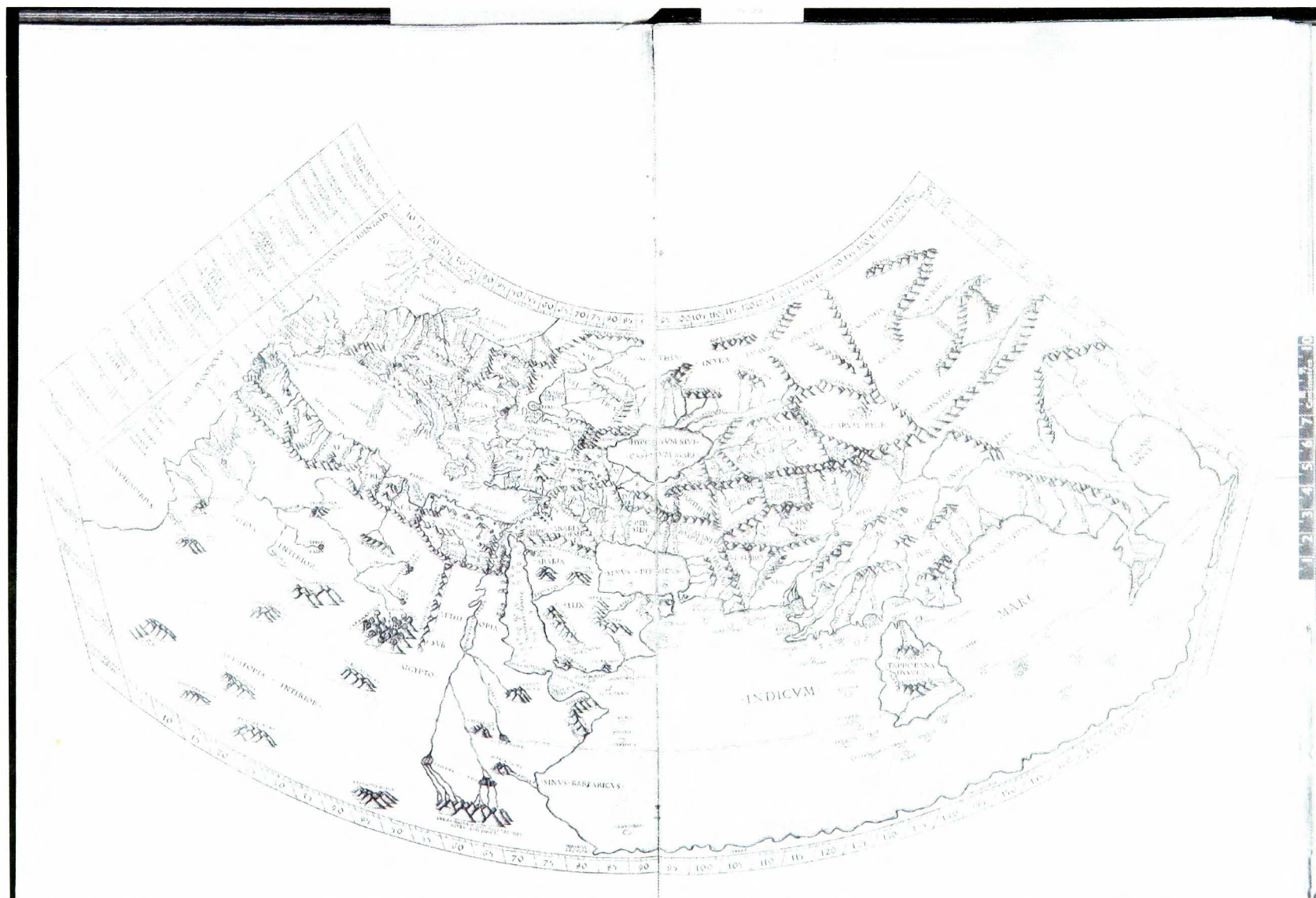


Figure 1 Claudius Ptolemy, *Alexandrini philosophi Cosmographia* (Rome: Buckink, 1478), World Map.
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Figure 2

Fra Mauro, *Mappamundi* (Murano, 1450).

Oriented to the South.

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Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.

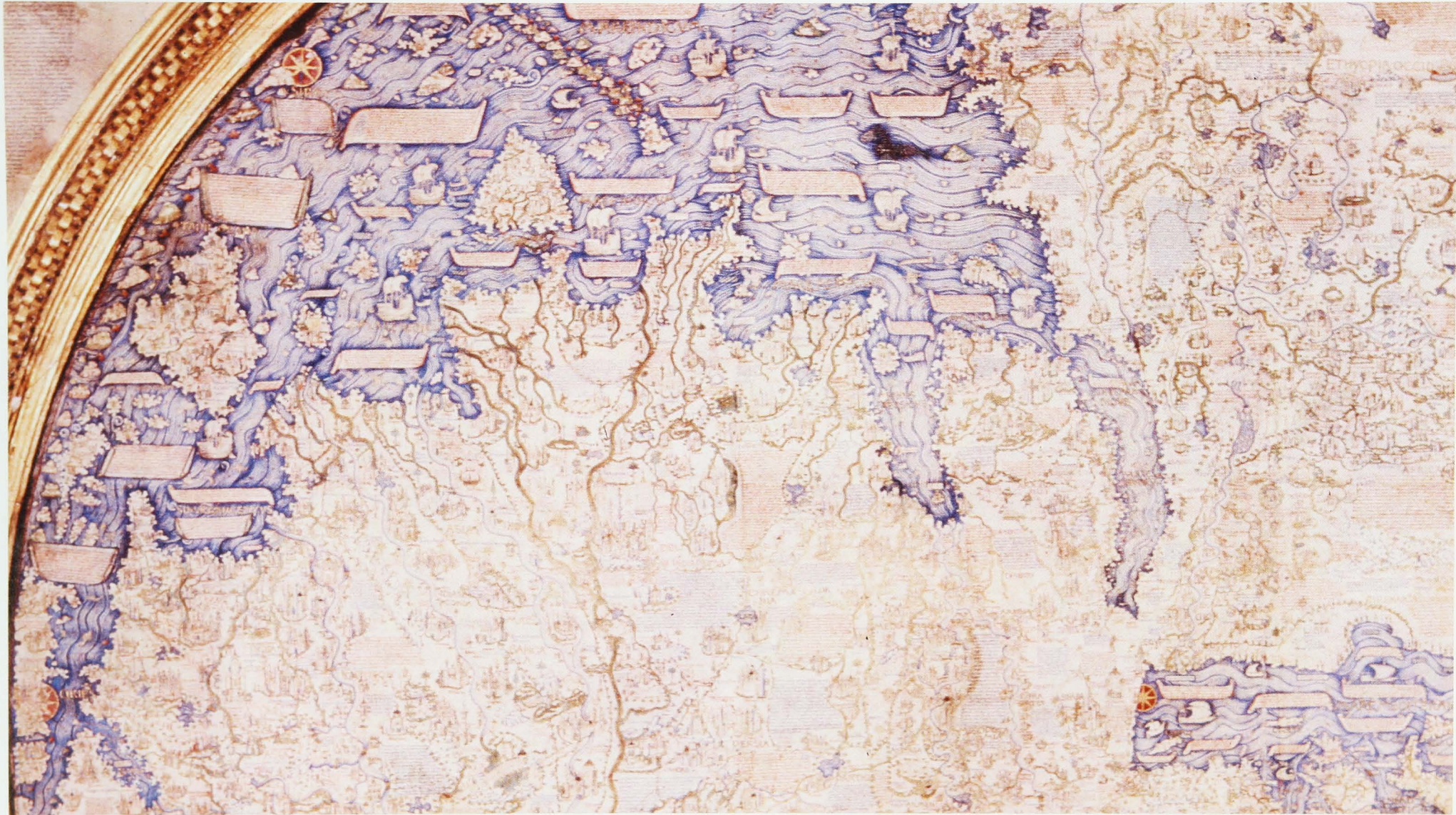


Figure 3

Fra Mauro's Indies: India (land mass), Taprobane (large island to the left), 'Saylam' (Sri Lanka), and multiple islands of the Indian Ocean. The second gulf from the right is the Persian Gulf. The gulf directly below Taprobane is the Gangetic Gulf.

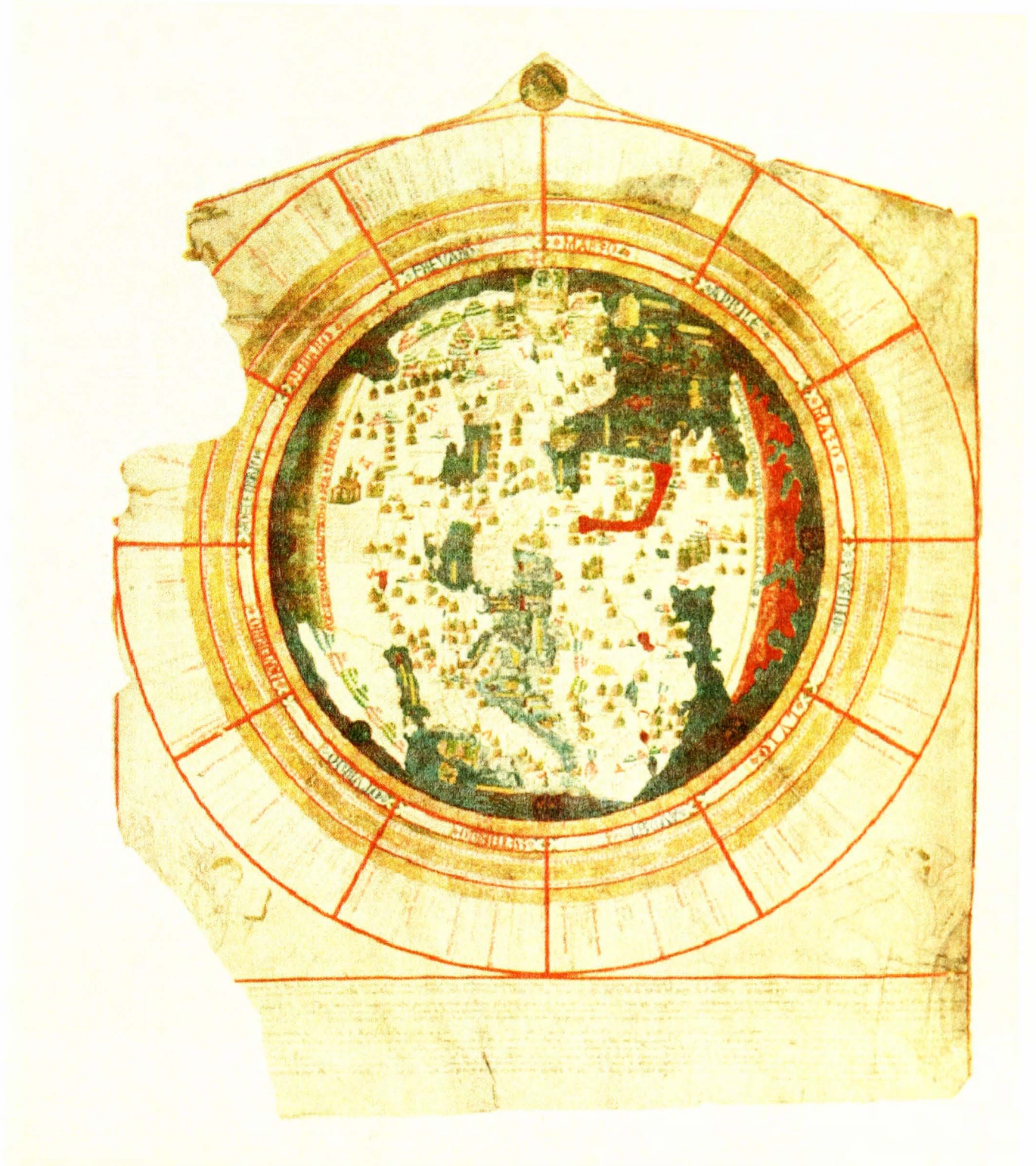


Figure 4

Giovanni Leardo, World Map, 1452/3.

Oriented to the East, with the terrestrial paradise at the top. Reproduced by kind permission of the Library of the American Geographical Society, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

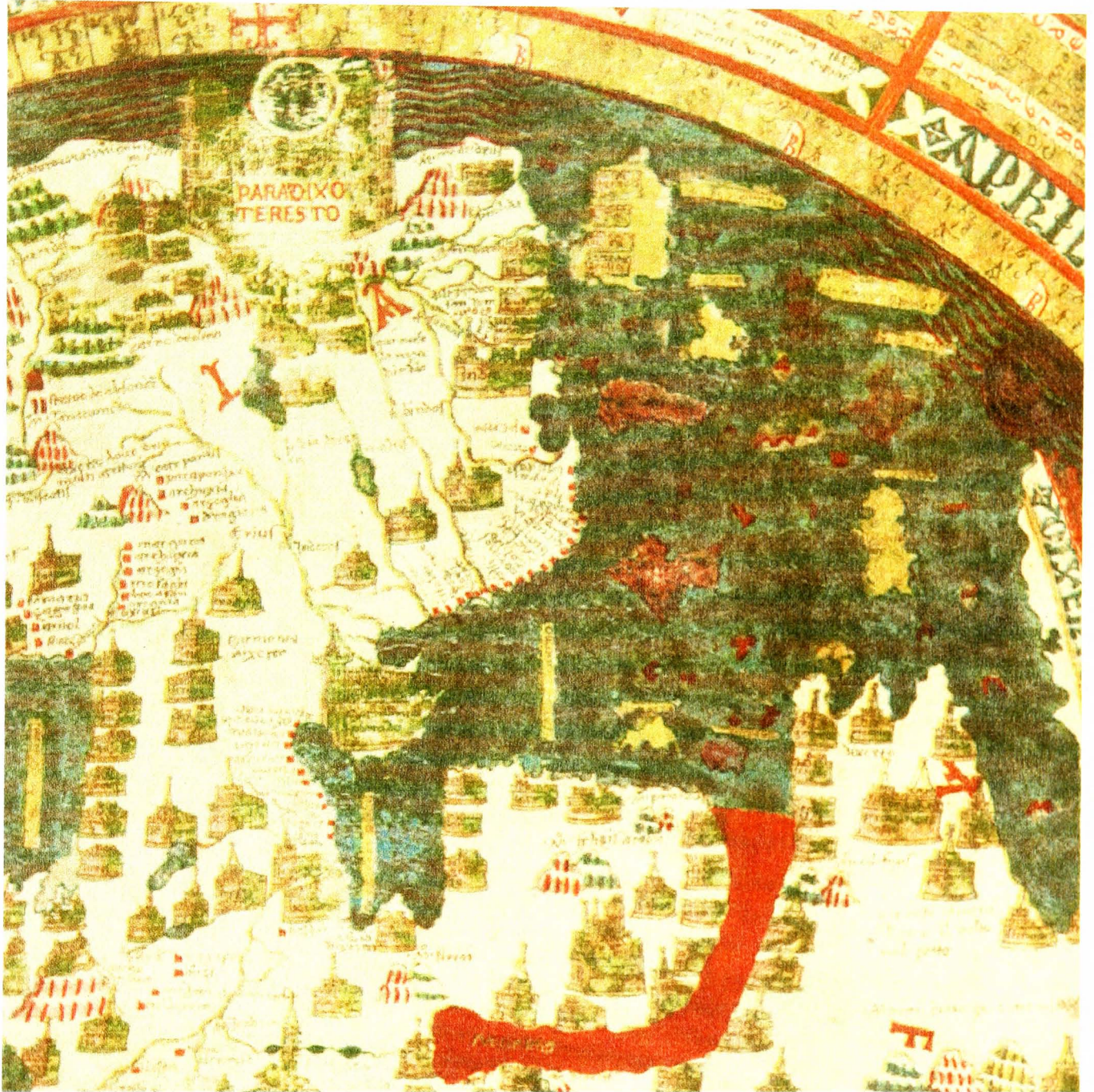


Figure 5

Giovanni Leardo's India and Indian Ocean.

Oriented to the East.

From top left to bottom right: the terrestrial paradise; Mons Meandrus; the mouths of the Ganges facing Taprobane; an unnamed, double-celled gulf facing an island (legend illegible but probably Sri Lanka); place names taken from Marco Polo's *Book*, their locations marked in red, running east-west along the coast to the mouths of the Indus and the Persian Gulf; further west, the Red Sea. The 'Isola de Ceridus' is a small red island with yellow legend to the south-east, in the Indian Ocean. The tip of the southern *terra incognita*, uninhabitable due to its heat according to Leardo, can be seen to the south.

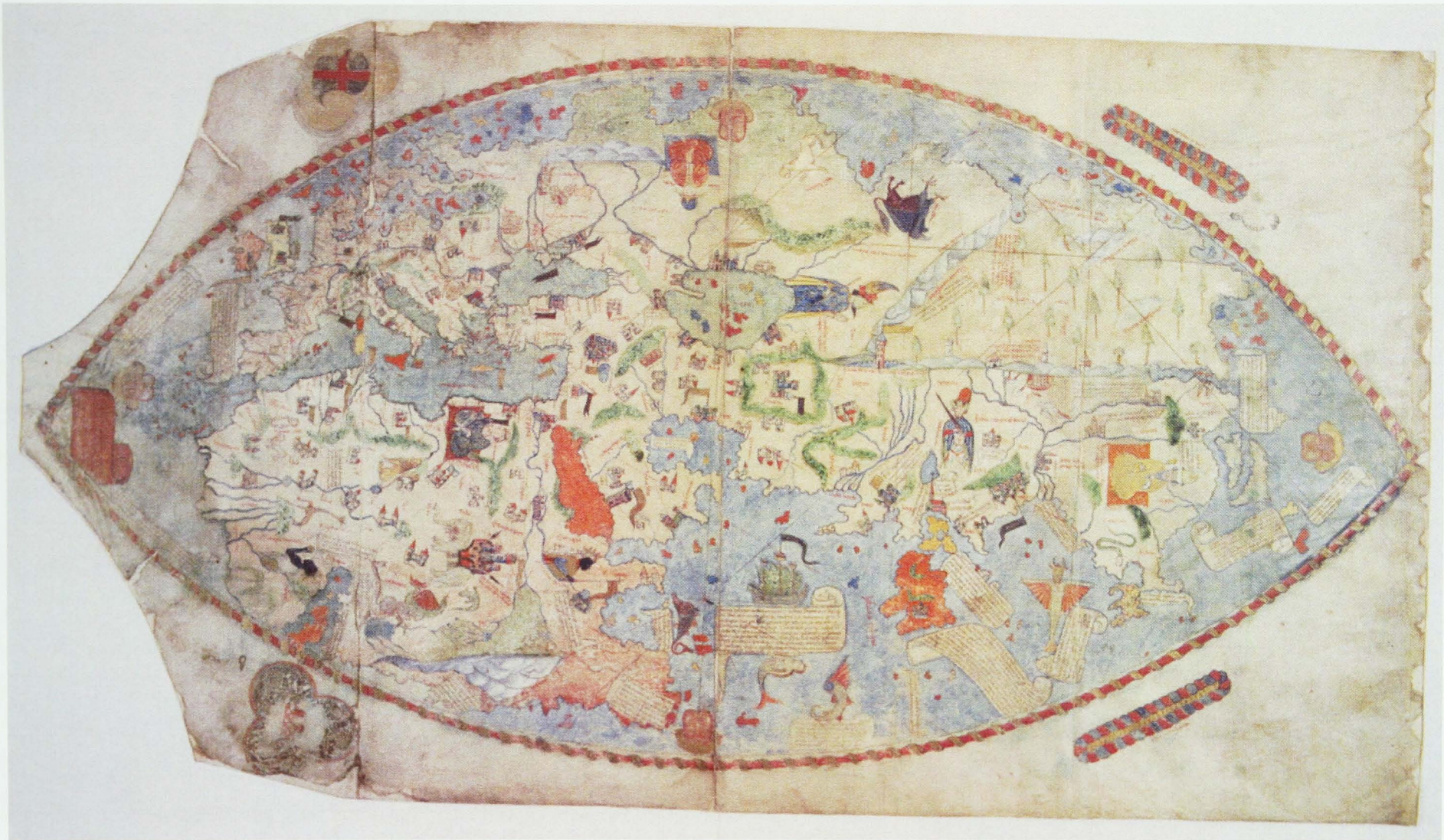


Figure 6 Genoese World Map or *Vera cosmographorum cum marino accordata descriptio*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Portolano 1.
Oriented to the North. Reproduced by kind permission of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence.



Figure 7 Southern and South East Asia on the 'Genoese' World Map.

Notable features (from left to right) include the Persian Gulf, four mouths of the Indus, sub-continent India with adjacent islands Xilana (Seillan, Sri Lanka) in yellow, opposite Malabar and Cail, and 'Traprobana' (Taprobane) in red slightly to its west. The city of Bizengalia (Vijayanagara) can be seen flying a black flag. To its east, the three mouths of the Ganges. The mounted king is an unspecified and probably purely decorative 'indorum rex'.

Figure 8

Henricus Martellus
Germanus, World Map,
Insularum illustratum,
London, British Library
Additional MS 15760,
fols 68v-69r, © The
British Library. All
Rights Reserved.

Martellus has the Indies cover a larger portion of the known world than does Ptolemy. Indian place names from Marco's *Book* are placed on the southward-extending, eastern 'Catigara' peninsula (Ptolemy's Cattigara). The most northerly of the toponyms taken from Marco's mainland India is placed on the same latitude as northern Taprobane (centre right).



Chapter 7: Imaginative Geography, Travellers' Accounts of the Indies, and Problems of Generic Expectation

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 I discussed the use of eyewitness travel accounts of India in the mid-fifteenth-century popularising scientific compendium of the Venetian engineer Giovanni da Fontana, the *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*. In so doing, I did not discuss the following anecdote, which Giovanni attributes to one of his regularly-used sources for information on India and the East, his Venetian contemporary Niccolò de' Conti:

And although I may seem to narrate a fable, nevertheless this same Nicholas tells that, in the location where this thing happened, is believed to be true, so that people flock continually from many regions to see it. And he said that in Seilam, the truly great island in the Indian sea, there is a high mountain, altogether unclimbable, in a certain wide valley, upon which is a single tree, always green, in the likeness of a fig tree, which may be clearly seen. No-one is able to reach the place in which this stands. And it is commonly reported that there was, on this same plain, a certain peasant who had been going to harvest with his wife and seized by the need to relieve himself, said to his wife: 'Wait for me for a short while'. And he approached the tree, where he did his business. When he had taken leaves from the trees and wiped his backside, he straightaway seemed to become youthful, both in strength and in appearance. And the grey hairs and the hairs of his beard fell out. His wife, seeing him coming back, believed him to be someone other than her husband, and began to run away. And when he cried out and, by means of certain signs made clear that he was her husband, the woman asked how it had happened that from an old man he was made young. He told her what had happened. She, indeed, desiring to become young again just like her husband, approached the tree, whereupon the tree moved itself, fleeing the woman. And this woman, together with her husband, chased the tree. And they say that in the end it settled in this place.¹

¹ 'Et licet videar fabulam enarrare tamen ipse Nicolaus fatetur, quod ubi hoc accidit, verum ita creditur, ut ex multis regionibus continue affluent gentes ad videndum. Et dixit quod in famosa insula Seilam magna valde in mare indico, est mons altus inascensibilis omnino in quadam ampla valle super quem est una sola arbor semper virens ad similitudinem ficus quae clare videtur. Nullus ad eum locum, in quo ipsa est adire valet, et est publica fama quod erat in quadam planitie, semel quidam rusticus qui cum uxore ad metendum accesserant, et coactus voluntate egerendi, dixit uxori: Parumper expecta me. Et ad umbram [fol. 122v] arboris accessit, ubi egressit. Qui cum frondes ex arboribus cepisset, et culum abstersisset, confestim visus est iuvenescere, et viribus et aspectu: et ceciderunt cani et barbae pilli. Uxor videns illum redeuntem existimavit alium esse a viro suo, et aufugere

The wider context of this excerpt, which appears in the encyclopaedia's chapter on trees and plants (5: 20, 'de arboribus et plantis', fol. 122r), is significant. The anecdote printed above is immediately preceded by a retelling of the legend of Alexander the Great in which the conqueror encounters a plain, on a mountain, upon which grow tiny trees that produce sweet, milk-giving fruit.² Over the preceding chapters, moreover, Giovanni has included details that he attributes to Niccolò de' Conti concerning several eastern islands including, for example, that of Andaman, to which is attributed an island whose water turns iron into gold (fol. 121v). Giovanni also gives much more information, taken from Niccolò and Odorico, concerning Seillan (variously termed Saibam, Seylem, and Silam). Over the space of several pages, readers are told of the island's legendary footprint of Adam, of Adam's Peak, upon the top of which no-one may safely remain at night, of the island's proximity to the terrestrial paradise, and of its precious gems (fol. 118r; fol. 120v). In context, then, the motifs in the opening lines of the above *fabula* raise expectations in its readers of a story that will follow a certain familiar structure. With generic expectations conditioned by references to marvellous trees in inaccessible locations in the legends of Alexander and to the marvels of Seillan and other islands, the reader is led to expect an account of a marvellous tree such as those familiar from the legends of the talking Trees of the Sun and Moon, or of the Tree of Life that gives marvellous, rejuvenating fruit.³ The reader's generic expectations are quickly subverted, however, as the traditional hero figure is replaced by the traditionally

caepit [*sic*]. Et illo clamitante et signa reddente atque certa quod vir suus esset, interrogavit mulier unde hoc accidisset quod ex sene iuvenis factus sit. Ipse casum retulit. Ea quoque volens reiuvenire simul cum viro ad arborem accedit, arbor vero inde se movit, aufugiens mulierem. Ipsa autem mulier cum viro ipsam arborem sequebantur: et tandem ad hunc locum se statuisse ferunt': Giovanni da Fontana, *Liber de omnibus rebus*, fol. 122r-v.

² *Liber de omnibus rebus*, fol. 122r. The plain with little fruit-bearing fig-like trees is a common feature in versions of the Alexander legend. See the Middle English *Wars of Alexander*, p. 155.

³ For the Trees of the Sun and Moon, see for example the *Wars of Alexander*, pp. 159-61. The Tree of Life or Youth is a motif that recurs in works in the genre of journeys to paradise, such as those of Seth, Alexander and a narrative of three monks who travel to the terrestrial paradise: Patch, *The Other World*, pp. 165-69; See Stith Thompson, *Motif Index of Folk Literature*, rev. edn, 6 vols (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1958), 2, D. 1338.3 for the rejuvenation by fruit of a magic tree motif. Thompson lists no corresponding motif for the rejuvenating effects of so much as touching the leaves of such a tree, let alone for Giovanni's altogether more scatological interaction. The story that Giovanni attributes to Niccolò probably derives ultimately from a legend that Ibn Battuta, who visited Sri Lanka in the mid-fourteenth century, reported concerning the *darakht rawān*, an 'ancient tree' whose leaves 'never fall off' on the pilgrim route up Adam's Peak. Battuta reports that this tree is nicknamed 'the walker', 'because if you look at it from the upper part of the mountain, it appears far away and close to the foot, whereas if you look at it from the foot of the mountain it is quite the

comic ‘rusticus’, and the manner in which youth is gained from legendary eastern trees — by eating their fruit — is parodied in a scatologically comic manner. At this point, the reader must quite suddenly re-assess his or her relationship to the story and to the text in which the story is included. A hitherto apparently serious cosmological compendium has been invaded by elements from burlesque or *fabliau* genres and the reader, lulled into a sense of security by the apparent familiarity of the story’s motifs, is surprised to suspect him or herself to be as much the target of the joke as the well-known legendary genre that is the focus of the parody.⁴

That a story of this nature is intended to be comic is, in view of generic markers such as its rustic protagonist and its scatological tone, obvious, in spite of Giovanni’s solemn protestations that it may be believable because stranger things have been reported by great authorities.⁵ However, intrusions of the comic into texts that modern scholarship assigns to ‘serious’ — normally non-fictional and certainly scientific — genres are often ignored or treated with obvious unease by modern scholars:⁶ in ignoring this comic passage in my earlier chapter on geography (6.2.2.3), I took the option taken by Thorndike, one of the few other modern commentators on this work, who makes no mention of humour in the text.⁷ By ignoring the eruption of the burlesque and scatological into works that we class as ‘serious’, however, scholars risk enclosing texts within a particular set of generic boundaries, and, equally, making decisions as to what elements of form and content were permitted to exist within these boundaries.

opposite’. Battuta pours scorn upon the ‘lying tales’ told by the local *jūgīs* (yogis), ‘one being that whoever eats of its leaves regains his youth’: Battuta, *Travels*, IV, p. 855.

⁴ Though attributed to Niccolò de’ Conti (‘Nicolaus Venetus’), this story appears neither in Poggio’s redaction of Niccolò’s travels, nor in the little-diffused Spanish version of Pero Tafur. As a Venetian contemporary of Niccolò, it is possible that Giovanni heard this tale, along with certain other anomalous details in his text, from Niccolò in person rather than reading them in Poggio’s *De l’Inde*. Whether its originator was Niccolò or Giovanni, however, I contend that this story was included in the *Liber* with the intention of raising a laugh.

⁵ ‘Ne mireris si talia scribo, quoniam non veritas est. Plinius et Rogerius, Isidorus, Albertus et alii quamplures similia descripsere. Multa enim in natura possibile divina clementia dominus fecit ut a pluribus sapientibus non credantur. Nec hoc impossibile iudicare debemus’: *Liber de omnibus rebus*, fol. 123v. Emendations: ‘a’ substituted for ‘u’ in ‘veritus’ (l.1); ‘ps’ substituted for ‘b’ in ‘describere’ (l.2).

⁶ Guy Halsall considers (with examples) the problem of scholars failing to notice or ignoring examples of humour in historical texts in his introduction, ‘Don’t worry, I’ve got the Key’, in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-21.

⁷ Thorndike terms the work a ‘combination of science and superstition’: *History of Magic*, VI, 172.

In the main, commentators have been curiously reluctant to consider the possibility that humour may have played a part in the responses of readers and authors approaching medieval accounts of eastern travel.⁸ Giovanni's scatological story of the Sri Lankan Tree of Youth illustrates perfectly the problems that give rise to this situation. Commentators, with clues provided by some obvious toponymic evidence and a framing device that clearly sets the audience up for a joke, willingly concede that the travel account in Boccaccio's tall tale of Fra Cipolla's travels in 'India Pastinaca' ('Parship India') is parodic (*Decameron*, VI, 10; see 7.2.3 below). To look beyond this for evidence of laughter as a response to eyewitness descriptions of 'the Indies' and their ethnographic content, however, takes the scholar into other, traditionally 'serious' genres, in which humour may be deployed without a comic framing device and sometimes, across the gap of centuries and cultures, may be difficult to identify with certainty. Failure to identify such episodes, however, has made it difficult to establish the extent to which Boccaccio's corrupt but inventive friar may relate to a wider trend in the reception of exotic travel accounts.⁹

In contrast to the critical neglect of the possibility that travellers' accounts could be considered comic, it has long been recognised that imaginative literature of the later Middle Ages drew upon tales of distant places for circumstantial detail, for plot elements, and for toponyms.¹⁰ Out of all the many works that drew on accounts of eastern travel for details of exotic background and, occasionally, details of plot, one work in particular has dominated the critical landscape. *Mandeville's Travels*

⁸ Reichert is unusual in considering this possibility: 'Fremde Frauen. Die Wahrnehmung von Geschlechterrollen in den spätmittelalterlichen Orientreisenberichten', in *Die Begegnung des Westens mit dem Ostens: Kongressakten des 4. Symposions des Mediävistenverbandes in Köln 1991 aus Anlass des 1000*, ed. by O. Engels and P. Schreiner (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1993), pp. 175-76.

⁹ For an exception, see Jenny Mezciems, "'Tis not to divert the reader": Moral and Literary Determinants in Some Early Travel Narratives', *Prose Studies*, 5 (1982), 2-19; Douglas R. Butturff has also suggested that satire is the dominant mode of *Mandeville's Travels*: 'Satire in *Mandeville's Travels*', *Annuaire Médiévale*, 13 (1972), 155-65 (p. 165). The most extensive study of Fra Cipolla's oration is that of M. Pastore Stocchi, 'Dioneo e l'orazione di Fra Cipolla', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 10 (1978), 201-15.

¹⁰ For the use of Marco Polo's *Book* in the early-fourteenth-century Franco-Italian epic *L'entree d'Espagne* and in the late-fifteenth-century texts of Pulci, Boiardo and Ariosto see Lerner, *Marco Polo*, p. 132; Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino', pp. 1186-91; pp. 1169-73; for its use in the satirical romance *Baudouin de Sebourc*, see Edmond-René Labande, *Étude sur Baudouin de Sebourc, Chanson de Geste: Légende poétique de Baudouin II du Bourg, Roi de Jérusalem* (Paris: Droz, 1940), pp. 92-99; pp. 32-38. For the use of material from *Mandeville* in the mid-fourteenth-century *Myreur des histours* of the Liégeois Jean d'Outremeuse to provide a fantastical backdrop for the adventures of Ogier the Dane, see Knud Togeby, *Ogier le Danois dans les littératures européennes* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1969), pp. 158-71.

has been repeatedly studied over the years, often presented as an epitome of the medieval West's view of the East. In this schema, however, *Mandeville* is often removed from its context among other redeployed travel accounts and is rarely considered alongside other imaginative, imitative fictions that have considerable similarities with it.¹¹ It is my view that this technique has often had the inevitable and sometimes negative impact of impressing upon readers the uniqueness of the work, sometimes to the detriment of the understanding of its participation in wider trends in the reception of the works that form its sources. As will become clear in the discussion that follows, for example, Mary Baine Cambell's claim that Mandeville's *Book* is the first use of the travel account genre with antifactual intent is, though not invalidated, nevertheless somewhat problematised by recontextualisation alongside Fra Cipolla's 'orazione' in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Odorico's *Recollections*.¹²

In the section that follows, then, I shall examine selected imaginative uses of eyewitness accounts of the Indies as evidence for their reception. I focus in particular upon texts that are, like the *Book of John Mandeville*, imitative or parodic. Such creative and, as will be seen, sometimes ambivalent re-uses can illuminate the generic expectations with which readers approached travel writing, and can considerably broaden our understanding of what responses to accounts of eastern travel were considered legitimate and appropriate by their early readers.

7.2 Fictions of eastern travel and generic expectation

In this section I shall discuss the influence and use of eyewitness travel accounts of India in the ambiguous travel fictions the *Book of Sir John Mandeville* and the *Libro Piccolo di Meraviglie di Jacopo da Sanseverino*, Boccaccio's comic tale of Fra Cipolla's fraudulent narrative of travel in the East, and an apocryphal set of recollections of eastern travel attributed in their manuscripts to Odorico da Pordenone himself. Written in Anglo-Norman French around 1356, the *Book of Sir John Mandeville* (henceforth *Mandeville*) is now universally agreed to be a fictional work that draws upon a variety of sources ranging from eyewitness through legendary and historical to encyclopaedic texts, but whose author's very existence

¹¹ The *Book of Sir John Mandeville* employed Jean le Long's French translation of Odorico's *Relatio*: Odorico da Pordenone, *Les Voyages en Asie*.

¹² Mary Baine Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1500* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 139.

cannot be independently verified.¹³ The work was quickly translated into many European languages, including French, English, Italian and Latin, and now survives in over 250 manuscripts.¹⁴ The *Libro piccolo di meraviglie* of Jacopo da Sanseverino, an early to mid fifteenth-century Italian composition, survives, by contrast, in only two copies.¹⁵ Though studied very little by comparison with the many articles and monographs dedicated to *Mandeville*, the *Libro piccolo* too is a fictionalised journey narrated by a fictionalised narrator in which, according to one of its few modern commentators, ‘a small nucleus of real information is progressively diluted in a crescendo of inventions, not lacking in burlesque connotations’.¹⁶ Boccaccio’s story of Fra Cipolla (Day VI, story 10), which contains a brief burlesque travel account clearly framed as a comic fiction, was written before 1352, and enjoyed, with the *Decameron* as a whole, a swift and broad level of diffusion.¹⁷ The apocryphal *Recollections* of Friar Odorico survive in apparently partial form in two manuscripts of its vernacular redaction, the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose*, the earlier and fuller of which dates from the later fourteenth century.¹⁸

The first three travel accounts, otherwise very different, have in common that they are narrated by unreliable or fictional travellers.¹⁹ Sir John Mandeville and

¹³ In this piece I use the earliest insular text of the work in the recent edition of Christiane Deluz (*LdMdm*). Deluz persuasively argues through careful demonstration of the translation errors in later redactions for the Anglo-Norman insular version as the original text, probably written in Liège in 1356: Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 81. Higgins characterises the *Mandeville* author as ‘deeply and probably irretrievably encrypted’: Iain M. Higgins, *Writing East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 8. Evidence for the *Mandeville*’s authorship is considered in many works, the most recent of which is M. C. Seymour, ‘Sir John Mandeville’, *Authors of the Middle Ages*, I: English Writers of the Late Middle Ages, 2 vols (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), I, pp. 1-64.

¹⁴ Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 348. For the reception of the work, see Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*.

¹⁵ The earliest manuscript (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Palatino 115) is of Tuscan origin as is, in all probability, the text itself: *Libro Piccolo di Meraviglie di Jacopo da Sanseverino*, ed. by Marziano Guglielminetti (Milano: Serra e Riva, 1985), p. 59.

¹⁶ ‘[...] un piccolo nucleo di dati reali si dissolve progressivamente in un crescendo di invenzioni non privo di valenze burlesche’: Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, ‘I viaggi e le scoperte’, *Letteratura italiana*, IX vols, gen. ed. Alberto Asor Rosa (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), V, 687-716 (p. 691).

¹⁷ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. by Vittore Branca (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), pp. 759-74. On its date of production: p. XLV; on its diffusion and reception before 1500: pp. LXIII-LXVI.

¹⁸ BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170.

¹⁹ Jacopo da Sanseverino has not been definitively identified as a pseudonymous writer. However, certain dating discrepancies — some of which must have been as obvious to his contemporaries as they are to modern scholars — as well as his claims to have met with and had his travel expenses paid by Prester John identify him as a fictionalised, if not fully fictional, narrator: *Libro piccolo*, p. 51; p. 81.

Jacopo da Sanseverino not only narrate their travel accounts, but also play a part in their own stories, interacting with the characters and peoples they describe and experiencing India's wonders first hand. Both also, though claiming to recount journeys to Jerusalem, actually decentre its narrative position.²⁰ Thus more than half of the *Book of John Mandeville* is concerned with the lands of the East beyond Jerusalem, through which the pseudonymous author travels after reaching his ostensible destination. Jacopo's decentring of Jerusalem is, if anything, more blatant. Upon reaching the Holy City, his text offers only the briefest of descriptions of it, with a promise (in the event poorly-fulfilled) that he will say more later, before starting on his journey to the far more fully-treated lands of Prester John and the Great Khan.²¹ In Fra Cipolla's oration, Jerusalem is, yet more radically, never really central to the narrative at all, as the entire travel account is a clever linguistic invention. In view of these broad areas of similarity between the three imaginative responses to travel accounts of the Indies, my area of focus in the following section will be the formal and structural relationship between travel accounts and these creative fictions, and, in particular the manner and function of the manipulation of eyewitness source material. My final case study, the *Recollections*, differs from the first three in that its fictionalised material is not a self-sufficient travel account, yet it is certainly a text that redeploys and manipulates both content and generic markers from eyewitness genres. Thus in all four cases, the mode of such manipulations and redeployments and the implication of these for the reception of the eyewitness accounts upon which they rely will be considered.

²⁰ Although, as Iain Macleod Higgins has observed, the fourteenth-century redactions of *Mandeville* are distinctive in asserting the literal and metaphorical centrality of Jerusalem, the work does, as Zacher has noted, decentre its position in Mandeville's journey and narrative: Higgins, 'Defining the Earth's Center in a Medieval "Multi-text": Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*', in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. by Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 28-53 (esp. pp. 40-44); Christian Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 140.

²¹ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, pp. 70-71.

7.2.1 *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*²²

The borrowings of ‘Sir John Mandeville’ from the description of India, Indonesia and China presented in Odorico’s *Relatio* have elicited mixed responses from readers and critics over the years. Certain of those who noticed similarities in the itinerary and adventures of the two travellers within the first century or so of the circulation of *Mandeville* rationalised these by positing the two as travelling companions.²³ Early modern and some later critics, evidently shocked at a perceived deception, dismissed Sir John Mandeville as a liar.²⁴ Revisionist later twentieth-century critics, however, have moved towards a consensus that *Mandeville* and its maker are literary artifices, though opinion is divided as to the function of the fiction. Scholarly assessments vary from identification of satirical intent to belief that it is a ground-breaking work of fiction, making use of a form ‘never previously used with antifactual intent’.²⁵

A second point of consensus amongst critics writing since Josephine Bennett’s ground-breaking work is that the changes that the *Mandeville*-author makes in relation to his source material in Odorico’s *Relatio* tend towards amplification, explanation and development. Scholars tend to compare Odorico’s text unfavourably with that of the *Mandeville*-author on grounds such as the works’ respective levels of detail, and the tolerance and relativism of their authors.²⁶ In addition to its re-use of the *Relatio*’s content, however, *Mandeville* also retains and puts to use certain formal elements from Odorico that clearly identify it as a personally-narrated travel

²² Centuries of confusion over the status of this work and its unknown author render necessary a clarification of terms to be used in the following discussion. The text’s narrator is referred to throughout as Sir John, or Sir John Mandeville. When it is necessary to discuss the work’s author, he will be designated, following Higgins, ‘the *Mandeville*-author’. A vast amount of critical literature is available on *Mandeville* but falls outside the scope of this thesis. The bibliography in Seymour, ‘Sir John Mandeville’ is comprehensive. The most significant and comprehensive critical works on *Mandeville*, which take rather divergent views on and approaches to it, are Deluz, *Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville*, which discusses the text as a work of geography, and Higgins, *Writing East*, who discusses the multiple redactions of the work that he plausibly argues is a multifunctional ‘multi-text’: pp. 12-13.

²³ Josephine Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville* (New York: MLA, 1954), pp. 219-20.

²⁴ Bennett, *Rediscovery*, p. 243.

²⁵ Butturff, ‘Satire in *Mandeville*’s Travels’; Campbell, *Witness*, p. 139.

²⁶ A series of such comparisons causes Bennett to conclude that ‘Odorico travelled in the flesh, but how much more truly Mandeville traveled in the spirit!’: *Rediscovery*, pp. 26-38 (p. 35). Higgins also uses a detailed comparison of both texts’ accounts of the dog-headed men in a way that suggests a cautious relativism on the part of *Mandeville*, and his representation of the work as ‘depicting both sexual restraint and (divinely enjoined) sexual indulgence’ leans towards an argument of the text’s relativistic tolerance: *Writing East*, pp. 146-49.

account.²⁷ The most striking of these are Odorico's claims to have personally seen, heard, experienced or tasted certain of the features he describes, and to have spoken with individuals from the societies that he encounters. Thus Sir John vows that the marvellous behaviour of fish in Indochina, developed from Odorico's awestruck account of a spawning season, is 'more wonderful than anything else that I have ever seen'.²⁸ On occasion, moreover, Odorico's interventions into the story become, with certain changes, Sir John's interventions.²⁹ On other occasions, the narrator does not state expressly that he has personally communicated with a people, but he does present their reported speech in a manner that implies direct conversation. The mode of the *Mandeville*-author's manipulation of his travel-account source material is well exemplified in his reworking of Odorico's account of the practice of free love attributed to Lamori (Sumatra). Developing material he finds in Odorico, the narrator purports to faithfully report the words of the Lamori islanders when he reports that 'the women say that they would sin if they were to refuse men, and that God commanded it thus of Adam and of those who were to descend from him when he said: "grow and multiply and fill the earth"'.³⁰ An invented explanation is similarly reported as authentic in the work's account of Dondia (Odorico's Dodin). Although Sir John does not repeat as his own Odorico's claim to have cautioned the people of Dondia for their practice of anthropophagic euthanasia, he nevertheless repeats and amplifies their reported explanations for this practice, placing into their mouths the invented and somewhat absurd suggestion that those killed in this way whose meat is lean are considered to have suffered too long, whereas those who provide fat meat have been sent to paradise without great suffering.³¹

Such interventions into the text, in particular the explanatory interventions, generally work, as they do in their Odorican source material, both to reinforce the narrator's personal authority and to engage the reader's understanding and thus

²⁷ Deluz has shown convincingly that the *Mandeville*-author worked from both Jean le Long's French translation of Odorico and William of Solagna's Latin: Deluz, *Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville*, p. 63.

²⁸ '[...]plus grand mervaille qe nulle chose qe jeo veisse unques': Mandeville, *LdMdM*, p. 348; *SF*, I, 15, 451; Odorico, *Les Voyages en Asie*, 16, p. 188.

²⁹ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 125.

³⁰ '[...] dient qe elle pescheroient si elles refusoient les hommes et qe Dieu le comanda ensy a Adam et a ceux qe descendirent de ly la ou il disoit "crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram"': Mandeville, *LdMdM*, p. 332.

³¹ Mandeville, *LdMdM*, p. 357.

interest in the reasons for the phenomena presented. At the same time, however, they sometimes strike a discordant note. As I mentioned briefly in relation to the passage concerning Lamori above, such interactions can signal moments of inversion and parody. When Sir John explains that the Lamori islanders believe that they are fulfilling the Lord's command to grow and multiply and fill the earth, he has them quote only part of the relevant biblical verse, omitting 'and subdue it' ['et subdite eam']. However, an orthodox interpretation of this verse offered by the *Glossa ordinaria* relates specifically to continence. In the *Glossa*, man's domination of the earth, in the crucial but omitted phrase, signifies the domination of reason over carnal disquiet, an interpretation that precisely opposes that attributed to the Lamori islanders.³²

In many instances when the narrator employs the technique of asserting his eyewitness status in order to reinforce his authority the resultant passages can, like the account of the Lamori islanders' belief that in practising free love they are doing God's will, be somewhat ambivalent. During his description of the Indies, the *Mandeville*-author in several notable instances employs the stylistic and formal conventions of eyewitness travel accounts in his re-use of legendary material from other sources. Into an account of Polumbum (Quilon) in Southern India taken from Odorico, the *Mandeville*-author interpolates an account of the Fountain of Youth adapted from the *Littera Presbyteris Johannis*.³³ Whoever drinks three times from this fountain after fasting 'is cured of whatever sickness he has. And those who dwell there and drink often are never sick and seem always to be young'.³⁴ Here, however, *Mandeville* departs from the authoritative third-person narration method followed in the *Littera*, introducing, following the format of an eyewitness account, an assertion of personal experience: 'I drank there three or four times, and I still feel

³² *Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio princeps of Adolph of Strassburg 1480/81*, 4 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), I, 16. It is noteworthy that many European heretical groups were accused of the same practice and suspected to use this biblical verse as its justification. The English mystic Margery Kempe, for example, reports being asked for her interpretation of this verse by a cleric of York attempting to ascertain her orthodoxy (c. 1417): *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. by B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 159.

³³ In the source, the fountain is 'not far from paradise' ('non longe a paradyso'): *Der Priester Johannes*, ed. Zarncke, pp. 912-13.

³⁴ '[...]il est curez de queconquez maladie q'il ait. Et cils qe demoerent et boivent sovent ils n'ount unques mala/ die et semblent toutdis estre jeovenes': Mandeville, *LdMdM*, pp. 320-21.

that I am the stronger for it'.³⁵ With this assertion, *Mandeville* crosses a generic line by interpolating a first-person intervention, a formal feature from the travel account genre, into legendary subject matter. The unchanging legendary India of the Prester John legends becomes, in the *Mandeville*-author's reworking, an empirically-observable, even tasteable, reality.³⁶ In one of the many indications of problematic ambivalence that pepper the text, however, the narrator's admission to his readers in the epilogue to his work that he is at the time of writing incapacitated by 'arthritic gout' undermines the authority of this apparently sober statement.³⁷

In addition to making use of certain of the formal techniques of eyewitness travel accounts of the East, *Mandeville* also incorporates certain modifications to the genre it imitates, that indicate its compiler's perception of certain generic deficiencies within his sources, including Odorico's *Relatio*. The work incorporates, for instance, both geographical description of the countries through which its narrator claims to travel, and cosmological speculation. In a significant departure from its source in the *Relatio*, *Mandeville*'s account of the Indies begins with what Higgins terms a 'short *mappamundi*-like geographical overview' that intellectually sets the scene for the oriental lands that the travel account is to discuss.³⁸ Concerning the Indies, this overview states:

From Ethiopia, one travels to India by many different countries. And Upper India is called Evilat [Havilah]. And India is principally divided into three parts: into India the Greater, which is a very hot country; India the Less, which is a temperate country, which stretches to Media, and the third part towards the north is very cold [...].³⁹

³⁵ '[...]Jeo y beu troiz fois ou IIII foiz, et unquore me semble qe jeo vaille mieux': Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 321.

³⁶ Sir John likewise travels to the gates of the terrestrial paradise, though he does not claim to have entered the Garden of Eden. Although narratives of journeys to paradise existed in this period (forming the source for that in *Mandeville*) these usually featured unnamed persons travelling in an undated, legendary period (the three monks), or were apocryphal journeys attributed to historical or biblical figures (Seth; Alexander the Great): Arturo Graf, *Miti, leggende e superstizioni del medio evo*, 2 vols (Turin: Loescher, 1892-93), I, 84-93.

³⁷ Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 479.

³⁸ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 124; Mandeville, *LdMdm*, pp. 300-05.

³⁹ 'De Ethiopie l'em va en Ynde par mointes diverses pais et appelle homme la haute Ynde Evilat. Et est Ynde divisé principalement en troiz parties, en Ynde Majour q'est très chaud pais, et Ynde le Menour qe est attempree pais, qe se tient a la terre de Mède, et la tierce partie vers septentrioun qe est très froide [...]': Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 305. It is common to find Biblical Havilah (Genesis 2. 11-12) located in India in the early Middle Ages and on traditional *mappaemundi*. The *Mandeville*-author's climactic division of the Indies appears, however, to be original.

In this overview, then, the three Indies are to be distinguished from one another by their respective climates. When working from Odorico's travel account, however, the *Mandeville*-author fails to adhere to the neat geographical system that is set up in this *mappamundi*. Thus in the chapter concerning the 'custumes es isles envyroun Ynde', the reader is told that one travels 'through India by many different countries until the Ocean Sea, and then one finds an island called Hormuz', indicating an understanding that Hormuz is in 'Ynde'.⁴⁰ Yet to which of the variety of Indies identified in the *mappamundi* Hormuz belongs, the text does not specify. Equally, the text does not identify Chana (Tana), his next port of call, as pertaining to any of the Indian divisions that he establishes in the above passage.⁴¹ Diverging significantly from his Odorican source, however, he does identify Zarchee (Paroct, Broach), a toponym extracted, if somewhat mangled, from Odorico's account of the Tana martyrdoms, as pertaining to 'Ynde la Maiour':

From there, one travels by sea towards Greater India to a city called Zarchee, which is very beautiful and very good, and there live many Christians of good faith, and there are many religious, specifically mendicants.⁴²

In this passage, general speculation concerning the activities of the mendicants in a vaguely-defined 'Greater India' that evidently resulted from mendicant preaching activities (2.2) has evidently combined in the author's mind with the information that four Franciscans were martyred in the vicinity of Tana. This process of association evidently results in the deduction that this region, in which Franciscans were clearly so active, must necessarily be identified with Greater India. Irrespective of the climactic schema that he outlines above, then, it is not the climate of the place that informs the *Mandeville*-author's identification of Greater India, but a far more lateral, associative process: Greater India is the place where the mendicant friars are.

In addition to the *mappamundi*-like excursus outlined above, *Mandeville*, in a digression brought about by a perceived requirement to explain the disappearance of the Pole Star at Lamori (Sumatra), also interpolates into Odorico's account of the

⁴⁰ '[...] l'em vait parmy Ynde par mointes diverses contrees jusques a la grant mer Occeane, et puis troeve homme un isle que ad noun Orynes [...]': *Mandeville*, *LdMdM*, p. 313.

⁴¹ *Mandeville*, *LdMdM*: p. 315.

⁴² 'De la vait homme par mer vers Ynde la Maiour a une cité qe ad noun Zarchee qe est moult bele et moult bone et y demorent moutz des christiens de bone foy, et si ad moultz des religious, especialement des Mendiaunz': *Mandeville*, *LdMdM*, p. 318.

Indies a cosmological excursus that situates India on the globe in relation to the West.⁴³ Much of the *Mandeville*-author's thought here appears to be based on Sacrobosco's *Sphaera*, according to which an inner sphere of the earth is surrounded by an outer sphere of water, but the eccentric nature of these two spheres leads to the emergence out of the water of the inhabited lands of the *oekumene* on one side of the globe.⁴⁴ The *Mandeville*-author, following Sacrobosco, divides this *oekumene* into seven climactic zones. However, following his blending of empirical, theoretical and legendary sources he reaches a surprising conclusion, drawn from the observation that the ancients did not incorporate the British Isles into their division of the world into seven climes:

This is because they [i.e., the British Isles] descend towards the west, stretching down into the curvature of the earth. Also there are the islands of India, and these, which are in the lowest part, are opposite us, and the seven climates extend to encompass the <whole> world.⁴⁵

This radical statement ingeniously explains the absence of the British Isles and the islands of India from the schemata of some ancient geographers in a very unconventional way. The islands of India on the one hand and the British Isles on the other, lie more than 180° apart on the surface of the globe, placing them both on its curvature below its axis. The seven climes of the ancients must therefore be extended to take account of this. Somewhat ingeniously, the *Mandeville*-author combines this theory with the Macrobian notion of an opposite *oekumene* inhabited by antipodes. Dismissing without comment the Macrobian notion of impassible torrid zones and ocean seas separating 'us' from 'them', the *Mandeville*-author thus brings the antipodes into the *oekumene* and places the islands of India in opposition to the lands of its author and readers, a move that has, as commentators including Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Higgins have noted, a moral and theological as well as a geographical significance.⁴⁶ As Higgins puts it, the text supports the notion that

⁴³ This vulnerable section in the insular version situates India in relation to the British Isles; in the slightly later, continental version it is situated in relation to an unspecified 'our country': Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 134.

⁴⁴ Mandeville, *LdMdM*, pp. 332-41; Randles, 'Classical Models', pp. 6-9; p. 23.

⁴⁵ 'Qar ils sont descendant vers occident en trehant vers la rondure du mounde, et la sont les isles de Ynde, et sont encountre nous qe sont en la basse partie et les VII climatz s'estendent environant le mounde': Mandeville, *LdMdM*, pp. 340-41.

⁴⁶ For the Macrobian schema of four inhabited *orbis terrarum* separated by impassable ocean streams, deriving ultimately from Crates of Mallos, see Randles, 'Classical Models', pp. 10-12; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'The Diversity of Mankind in the *Book of John Mandeville*' in *Eastward*

East and West exist ‘in a specular relation to one another’.⁴⁷ Parallel wonders inhabit the islands of India and Ireland, and, when Sir John describes a wonder of the West to the inhabitants of the East, ‘they’ are as amazed as ‘we’ are when ‘we’ learn of ‘their’ marvels.

Higgins and Akbari also note that, in addition to setting up a cosmological symmetry between India and the West, the *Mandeville*-author employs the same technique of parallelism, and indeed the same data, to set up an ethnographic opposition between the two physically opposed parts of the world.⁴⁸ India, Sir John notes, is under the first clime of slow-moving Saturn, which governs the disposition of its people to the extent that they rarely move out of their own country, hence the large number of peoples and cities in those parts. England, Sir John tells us, is, on the contrary, in the seventh clime of the fast-moving moon, which accounts for the readiness of its people to ‘travel through different paths and to seek for foreign things and the diversities of the world’.⁴⁹ Undermining this neat parallelism, however, I suggest that there lies yet another ambiguity that disrupts the presentation of cosmological symmetry. This passage is no doubt in part a reference to the wandering English knight himself: yet, given that the unknown author of this ‘multi-text’ did not travel at all, let alone seek the ‘diversities of the world’, the question of how serious an attempt to reconcile worldly diversity this really is must necessarily be raised, even though it cannot be answered.

Mandeville, then, utilises, modifies, and subverts the conventions of eastern travel writing as exemplified in its Odorican source material, attempting to bridge the gap between observation and explanation. The work’s resolutions between empirical observation and theoretical geography and its explanations of natural and ethnographic phenomena are, however, regularly undermined by ambiguities, often with subversive effect. Thus the belief of the people of Lamori that by engaging in

Bound: Travel and Travellers 1050-1550 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 156-76 (p. 170); Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 128-29.

⁴⁷ For this and the Ireland-India parallel, see Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 138.

⁴⁸ Higgins, p. 138; Akbari, ‘The Diversity of Mankind’, pp. 163-64.

⁴⁹ ‘[...] de cheminer par diverses voies et de sercher choses estranges et les diversités du mounde’: Mandeville, *LdMdm*, p. 313. Although the belief that India was well-populated because its people had never left their country was widely-diffused (see for example Vincent, *SM: Speculum historiale*, I: 64), no firm source for Mandeville’s theory of planetary influence on ‘racial’ behaviour has yet been suggested. Akbari lists a parallel in the work of John of Ashenden: ‘The Diversity of Mankind’, p. 174. n. 21.

free love they are doing God's will, a passage that has sometimes been interpreted by critics as underlining the work's tolerant and forward-looking attitude to religious diversity could be a slyly funny clerical joke. Sir John's climatic theory of human difference is equally capable of opposing interpretations. The author's manipulation of his eyewitness material reveals, I argue, a range of contradictory attitudes towards it. Odorico's text is relied upon but modified. It motivates the author both to serious geographical diversions and to outrageous, occasionally parodic, fabrications. The hybrid text that emerges from the *Mandeville*-author's composition process thus testifies to fascination, dissatisfaction, uncertainty and ambivalence in its relation to its Indian source material, and to a simultaneous desire to create and subvert a unified world-picture.

7.2.2 Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo di meraviglie*

Jacopo da Sanseverino's *Libro piccolo di meraviglie*, like *Mandeville*, weaves formal elements drawn from eyewitness travel accounts with topoi taken from legendary sources and, it appears, elements drawn wholly from the writer's imagination. Like *Mandeville*, the text demonstrates generic ambivalence, with stylistic features drawn from both overtly fictional and purportedly factual genres. Jacopo, narrating events, as does Sir John Mandeville, in the first person singular and plural, claims to have set out in order to 'go to see the greater part of the world'.⁵⁰ Like Sir John Mandeville, he specifies the date of departure for his journey (1 May 1416). He also specifies his own name, and the name or position — albeit more suggestive than realistic — of his three travelling companions.⁵¹ At this stage, the narrative appears to follow the formal conventions of the travel account, specifying as, for example, does Marco Polo's *Prologue*, dates and locations of departure, names of persons involved and of witnesses encountered *en route*. From this point on, however, the narrative form of the text becomes less fixed. Stylistic elements belonging to purportedly factual travel accounts mingle with those pertaining more usually to legendary journeys. Following a surprisingly brief account of the travellers' first port of call, the Holy Land, the text moves to Cairo, where Jacopo and his companions negotiate with a caravan to take them to the lands

⁵⁰ '[...] andare cercando gran parte del mondo': Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 69.

⁵¹ '[...] lo siniscalco di Bramante, messer Guido dalla Loca e'l visconte di Teromagna': Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 69.

of Prester John.⁵² Departing from the conventions of travel accounts, however, Jacopo does not set out a direction of travel at this stage in the narrative. Instead, he notes down numbers of days of travel from place to place: three days take the traveller from Cairo to the Sandy Sea; another twenty-four days takes the travellers to the Moorish realm of Moscadone; a further seven days takes the travellers to Melcifolo, another Moorish realm.⁵³ Whereas Sir John travels through eastern lands contextualised to at least some degree in his ‘mappamundi’ excursus, Jacopo’s travel takes him to unforeseen, often allusively-named locations. One result of this feature, in combination with the topoi of the places the traveller describes (including giants, pygmies and headless men), is that the text comes to stylistically resemble works such as the *Littera Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, in which the protagonist, whose motive is primarily exploration and conquest, encounters nameless places populated by strange peoples and creatures one after another in the most vaguely-defined of eastern journeys.⁵⁴

Certain features of the text indicate, however, that significant changes have been made to its legendary source material in order to bring it closer to the stylistic conventions of travel accounts. In his section on ‘L’isola di femina’, clearly inspired by accounts of the Amazons from the Alexander legends, Jacopo adds a touch of verisimilitude with a convincingly Polian summary of the island’s situation and main products:

It is twelve miles from dry land to this island. And in this place they harvest kermes-beetles, grain, wax, cloves and honey.⁵⁵

In its use of toponyms mentioned above, the text mingles the characteristics of purportedly factual and overtly imaginative genres to such a degree that it is difficult to disentangle their elements. The pseudo-traveller carefully attributes a toponym and, usually, the name of the ruling sovereign, to almost every legendary place he visits. In all but a few cases, these toponyms have no clear source, whether in the text’s legendary sources or in known contemporary travel accounts. Some of the

⁵² The group’s stay in the Holy Land fills a mere four pages of the work’s modern edition: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, pp. 69-72.

⁵³ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, pp. 73-74.

⁵⁴ See *The Romances of Alexander*, ed. Kratz, pp. 107-25.

⁵⁵ ‘Da questa isola a terra ferma sono dodici miglia. E drento vi si ricoglie molto chermisi e grana e cera e gherofani e mèle’: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 86.

toponyms have, moreover, as Cardona has noted, suggestive connotations:⁵⁶ ‘Filisteo’ is clearly biblical Philistine; ‘Verdiletto’, a great city of Prester John, clearly suggests ‘true delight’; ‘Campofavano’ suggests a delightful field or plain.⁵⁷ Unlike the deployment of such toponyms in overtly fictive texts, such as legendary or allegorical journeys, however, such allusive place names are not in the *Libro* generally deployed in such a way as to make use of their connotations.⁵⁸ Particularly surprising, however, is the author’s use of invented toponyms, even when apparently borrowing from Marco’s or Odorico’s texts. Thus Jacopo arrives at an island in which the inhabitants practise the specific form of anthropophagic-euthanasia related by both Odorico and by Marco. In Jacopo’s version of this now familiar story, a ‘physician’, rather than an astronomer or priest, assesses the unfortunate sick person and ‘consults with other physicians’.⁵⁹ If they judge that the sick person will not recover, his closest relations ‘kill him, cut him into pieces, and put him into a cauldron to cook, boiled in wine, and they season him with spices, and then they invite the closest relatives and eat him, and they make a great feast of it’.⁶⁰ In Jacopo’s version, the custom is attributed to the invented island of Menizia, rather than to Odorico’s Dondin or to Marco’s Dragoiam.⁶¹

Like *Mandeville*, the *Libro piccolo* also employs the formal topos, deriving from the travel account genre, of narrating stories of the traveller’s own and his companions’ participation in events and interactions with the foreign peoples they meet. In a manner reminiscent of William of Rubruck, the *Libro piccolo* pays a remarkable amount of attention to the mechanics of travel, referring periodically to the practicalities of bargaining with caravanners and dealing with interpreters.⁶² In

⁵⁶ Cardona, ‘I viaggi e le scoperte’, p. 691, n. 4.

⁵⁷ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, pp. 79, 82, 100.

⁵⁸ Luigi Sasso provides an example of the river Rhône (Rodano or Rodanus) interpreted as related to the Latin ‘rodere’ (to bite, gnaw), in a polemic text against the Avignon papacy: Sasso, *Il nome nella letteratura: L’interpretazione dei nomi negli scrittori italiani del medioevo* (Genoa: Marietti, [1990]) pp. 40-41.

⁵⁹ ‘[...] si piglia consiglio con l’altri medici’: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 88.

⁶⁰ ‘[...] l’ucidono, e fannone pezi, e mettollo a cuocere in caldaie, lessò, nel vino, e mettonvi su molte spezerie, e di poi i più stretti parenti invitano e se lo mangiono, e fanone gran festa’: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 88.

⁶¹ Similarly, the custom of burning servants of a dead king with him on his funeral pyre is attributed by Marco to Maabar, but by Jacopo to a fictional ‘provincia chiamata Luzica’: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 89.

⁶² Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 72; pp. 79-80; p. 102; William of Rubruck discusses the technicalities and difficulties of dealing with his interpreters and servants: *The Mission of Friar*

order to add corroborative detail, the author provides Prester John with a Genoese ‘torcimano’ named Carlo Grimaldi, and the group with a Genoese ‘interprete’ named Adorio Doria, the former of whom enquires of the party as to the state of relations between England and France at the time, whilst the latter serves to shore up the statements made by a fictional son of Timur as to the great size and power of his area of lordship.⁶³

The slightly modified version of the *Libro piccolo* that appears in the work’s later manuscript, BAV, Barb. lat. 4048, adds yet further circumstantial details to Jacopo’s stories which, drawing upon formal elements consistent with travel accounts, add verismilitude. Like *Mandeville*, the *Libro piccolo* contains details of the interaction of Jacopo and his companions with the legendary landscape of the *Littera Presbyteri Johannis*. In BAV, Barb. lat. 4048, the text gives an eyewitness account of the marvellous manner in which, in the land of Prester John, the tomb of St Thomas opens upon the profession of a faithful Christian, but, if open, closes in the presence of ‘a Moor’. Jacopo claims that, with the permission of the tomb’s guardians, he checked ‘whether there was inside this shrine any device that opened and closed it mechanically’. Consequently, Jacopo is able to confirm the miracle by asserting on his own authority that ‘we saw that it was clear’.⁶⁴ In the same vein, this same later manuscript also contains a significant and intriguing modification to Jacopo’s account of the practitioners of anthropophagic euthanasia, whom he situates, as I have said, in Menizia. In this later variant the traveller, asserting that he was invited to participate in many anthropophagic feasts, makes clear at the same time that the death feast is not in fact only for family and friends, and that it is thus a custom that he has personally witnessed:

William of Rubruck, trans. by Peter Jackson, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Ser., 173 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), pp. 66-67.

⁶³ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 80; p. 102. The author has picked the family names of the moderately high-ranking Genoese Grimaldi and Doria families, though he does not appear to be here representing particular individuals. ‘Turcimanno’, a loan-word from Arabic, is defined by Pegolotti as a person able to mediate between languages: Pegolotti, *Pratica della mercatura*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ ‘[...] se dentro a questo tabernacolo avesse alcuno ingiegno che s’aprisse e serrasse per ingegno [...] e [...] vedemo ch’era netto’: Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 136.

I swear by my faith that we four knights were invited to eat many times of these dead and cooked bodies. We went to these farewell feasts in order to see how they perform their customs.⁶⁵

In order, however, to make way for this assertion of truthfulness and plausible circumstantial detail, the redactor of the version in BAV, Barb. lat. 4048 must modify the version of the story that appears in the earlier manuscript, according to which only the closest relatives of the dead are invited to such feasts.⁶⁶

The changes to Jacopo's accounts of Menizia and of St Thomas in BAV, Barb. lat. 4048 are, in my view, particularly significant in that they attempt to provide pre-emptive answers to questions that an attentive reader or listener might be expected to ask of an eyewitness travel account. Could the apparently miraculous tomb of St. Thomas, perhaps, be opened or closed not by the intervention of God but by some kind of engineered device? How, equally, could travellers, strangers to the societies they encounter and passing through only for a short while, be present as authentic witnesses at an allegedly private anthropophagic ritual?⁶⁷ Thus the later redaction of the *Libro piccolo* represented in BAV, Barb. lat. 4048 pre-emptively responds to the concerns of sceptical readers by offering explanations. Most extraordinary and noteworthy, moreover, is the explanation that Jacopo gives for his companions' acceptance of the invitation to dine with the cannibals: that he does so in order to observe their customs. Thus in this early-fifteenth-century fictionalised travel account, we see presented a group of travellers intentionally setting out to make ethnographic observations.

The signals that the *Libro piccolo di meraviglie* gives out with regard to generic expectations of travel accounts are many and contradictory. The text is a sophisticated fiction that has absorbed certain of the formal and structural peculiarities of travel accounts, including the convention of corroborative detail. The introduction into the text of the *Libro piccolo* in BAV Barb. lat. 4048 of significant additions of circumstantial detail and assertions of personal experience suggests,

⁶⁵ 'Giurovi per la fede mia che noi quattro cavalieri fummo invitati a mangiare più volte di quelli corpi morti e cotti. Noi andammo a quelli comiati per vedere loro usanze, come facevano': Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 138.

⁶⁶ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 88.

⁶⁷ W. Arens asks precisely this question of a variety of accounts of anthropophagic practices. The incapacity of the texts he examines to provide a satisfactory answer is marshalled as evidence for his

moreover, that the author of these amendments anticipated a relatively high level of sophistication on the part of his audience. Readers of BAV, Barb. lat. 4048 were expected to require explanation or resolution of narrative difficulties and the verisimilitude afforded by greater corroborative and circumstantial detail. Finally readers were expected to find it plausible that a group of European travellers would attend a cannibalistic feast purely and self-consciously as observers of customs: indeed, as ethnographers. At the same time, however, as with *Mandeville*, the text incorporates elements, such as its suggestive toponyms, that indicate its problematic, ambivalent status.

7.2.3 Fra Cipolla's 'orazione'

Whilst *Mandeville* and the *Libro piccolo* often deploy the formal conventions of accounts of eastern travel in order to lend verisimilitude to their texts, the 'orazione' of Fra Cipolla in Boccaccio's *Decameron* makes use of precisely the same conventions in order to mock the genre and those people whom he evidently perceives to be its more disreputable practitioners. Closing a day in which the storytellers were challenged to speak on the triumph of wit, Boccaccio has one of his storytellers, Dioneo, tell the tale of Fra Cipolla. Fra Cipolla, a friar of St. Anthony who is clearly identified as an unreliable narrator, delivers to his congregation an oration that is a masterful example of saying nothing eloquently. Endeavouring to explain how the feather of the Angel Gabriel that he had planned to show to his congregation has metamorphosed into a lump of coal, the friar takes his audience on a virtual pilgrimage, offering a duplicitous and gripping narrative of an exotic journey that takes him on a geographically improbable journey through a topsy-turvy India ('India Pastinaca' or Parsnip India), to a comically-inverted Holy Land, in search of such elusive holy relics as the finger of the Holy Spirit and 'an article or two of the Holy Catholic faith'.⁶⁸ Fra Cipolla's mendacious and parodic narrative bears, as this section will show, a striking resemblance in form and in motifs to the

conclusion that such accounts rest either on assumption or on plain fiction: Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth*, see esp. pp. 79-119.

⁶⁸ 'il dito dello Spirito Santo' and 'de' vestimenti della Santa Fé cattolica': *Decameron*, ed. Branca, Day VI, 10, pp.770-71; translations taken from *Decameron*, trans. by G. H. McWilliam (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 505-14, (pp. 511-12). For a full discussion see Stocchi, 'Dioneo e l'orazione di Frate Cipolla', 201-15. Louise O. Vasvari considers this part of Dioneo's tale as an example of the genre of the literature of Cockaigne, or the world-turned-upside-down: 'The

mid-fourteenth-century vernacular translation of Odorico's *Relatio*, the *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose*.

Certain of Fra Cipolla's formal conventions, however, such as dropping exotic toponyms into the text, are common to many travel accounts of the period. Thus Fra Cipolla, appearing to follow in the footsteps of Marco Polo, apparently departs from Vinegia (Venice) and passes through Baldacca (Baldac; Baghdad). In Fra Cipolla's case, however, these, in common with the majority of his toponyms, refer to contemporary Florentine locations rather than to the waystations on an eastern journey that the context of a travel account would suggest. Perhaps the most telling of Fra Cipolla's invented toponyms is, however, the 'terra di Menzogna', the Land of Lies:

Having passed the Arm of St. George, I reached *Truffia* and *Buffia* (i.e., lands of swindlers and jokers), well-inhabited lands with large populations. And from there I arrived in the *Terra di Menzogna* (i.e., the Land of Lies), where I found many of our friars, and those of other religious orders [...].⁶⁹

Like so much of the word-play in Boccaccio's story, these toponyms work on more than one level. The passage as a whole, in addition functioning as satire upon mendicant abuses of position and as a self-referential joke relating to the friar's own lies, recalls the summary place descriptions found in many of Odorico's and Marco's shorter chapters.⁷⁰ A resemblance of structure and content can be seen to Odorico's introduction to Zayton (Chü'an-chou), the major port of 'India Superiore' (Southern China) to which the fourteenth-century Franciscan Order sent missions:

Geography of Escape and Topsy-Turvy Literary Genres', in *Discovering New Worlds*, ed. Westrem, pp. 178-92.

⁶⁹ 'Io capitai, passato il Braccio di San Giorgio, in Truffia e in Buffia, paesi molto abitati e con gran popoli; e di quindi pervenni in terra di Menzogna, dove molte de' nostri frati e d'altre religioni trovai assai [...]', *Decameron*, ed. Branca, Day VI, 10, p. 769; See also G. H. McWilliam's translation, *Decameron*, p. 511.

⁷⁰ The tale's comic and parodic elements are not generally read as straightforwardly antifraternal. Luigi Rosso's long close reading of the text, for example, suggests that it is not antifraternal but anti-abuse of position, and that the comedy of the tale is not in its particulars but in its 'general inspiration' ('afflato generale'): Luigi Rosso, *Lecture critiche del Decameron* (Bari: Laterza, 1956), p. 272.

I left this country, and travelled for 36 days, passing through many cities and lands. And I arrived at a noble city called Zaiton, in which our Minor friars have two *loca*.⁷¹

Once the content of both passages is disregarded and attention is focused on their form, it can be seen that both passages function in similar ways. Both narrate travels through places that noticed in only the most general terms, the main focus of the passage being on the existence and activities in these places of the friars of their orders. If it is allowed, moreover, that Fra Cipolla's 'orazione' is not merely, as is often suggested, a general condemnation of dishonesty on the part of some mendicants combined with a 'kind of parody of the accounts of travels in the East in vogue at the time', but rather is a more specific satire of mendicants' travel accounts of the east, and perhaps even that of Odorico in particular, the passage becomes a perfect *double-entendre*.⁷² Rather than playing upon the notion that some mendicant preachers are dishonest, this passage then becomes an altogether more specifically-directed joke, closely related to the context of earlier fourteenth-century missionary endeavours and the often remarkable claims concerning their activities in the East.⁷³

In addition to identifying and parodying the stylistic characteristics of vernacular accounts of travel in the 'three Indies', Boccaccio's burlesque account of eastern travel shows the same facility in parodying their content. Fra Cipolla's comically compressed account of 'India Pastinaca' neatly demonstrates both these elements:

And, in brief, I travelled so far within that I reached as far as Parsnip India [*India Pastinaca*], where I assure you by the habit that I wear that

⁷¹ 'Di questa contrada mi parti' e venni per XXXVI giornate, passando per molte cittadi e terre. E venni a una nobile cittade ch'è nome Zaiton, nella quale i nostri frati Minori àno due luoghi': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, 30, p. 162.

⁷² 'una specie di parodia dei racconti dei viaggi nell' Oriente allora di moda': Rosso, *Lecture critiche*, pp. 272-73.

⁷³ Stocchi draws comparisons with the mid-fourteenth-century account of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the *Libro d'Oltramare* of Fra Nicolò da Poggibonsi: Stocchi, 'Dioneo e l'orazione di Frate Cipolla', p. 207. For the part of Fra Cipolla's oration that relates to accounts of the Holy Land, this is a possibility. The context of missionary activities outlined in Chapter 3, however, relates I think, rather closely to Fra Cipolla's wanderings in and around 'Parsnip India'. As I have mentioned briefly in 2.2.2, members of the *Societas peregrinantium* were accused even within their own orders of failing to carry out their duties in the East and instead evading discipline by their wanderings. They were also, as a 1312 encyclical of the Dominican Minister General shows, accused of abusing privileges such as the freedom to carry money, by investing in mercantile activity and treating with the merchants of Alexandria, thus breaking the papal prohibition on trade in the lands of the Sultan of Egypt: Richard, *La Papauté*, p. 138, note 64.

I saw feathered creatures [*'pennati'*] fly, a wonderful thing to those who have not seen it [...].⁷⁴

The reference to 'India Pastinaca' functions as a biting comment on the seemingly endless variety of 'Indies' whose existence was reported by travellers in the East, each distinguished, as has been shown repeatedly throughout this thesis, with a different and sometimes novel qualifying adjective. Use of such a derisory designation expresses perhaps a rather withering authorial scepticism concerning the reality of the multiple Indies of merchants and missionaries. Fra Cipolla, moreover, upon reaching his own personal India, encounters, like the Franciscan Odorico, a marvel there.⁷⁵ Birds fly and, as Fra Cipolla quite truthfully says, this is a marvellous thing to anyone who has never seen it. A close parallel for this final phrase is provided by Odorico's protestation, at the end of his account of mainland India and the islands he associates with it, that there are 'many novelties' that he has seen in India but concerning which 'I do not write, because, unless a man had seen them, he could not believe them'.⁷⁶

In addition, then, to being a cleverly comic demonstration of the duplicitous capacity of the spoken and written word,⁷⁷ Fra Cipolla's account constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* and, consequently, a deconstruction of the exotic eyewitness travel account. His use of duplicitous toponyms highlights the meaninglessness of Indian place names, even when carefully transliterated, for contemporary audiences. His mockery of the marvels of Bachi, the land where water flows downwards and India Pastinaca, where feathered creatures fly, on one level demonstrates the fraudulent friar wilfully misrepresenting the mundane as marvellous. At the same time, it suggests that the wondrous is contextually determined: anything is

⁷⁴ 'E in breve tanto andai adentro, che io pervenni mei infino in India Pastinaca, là dove io vi giuro per l'abito che io porto addosso che io vidi volare i pennati, cosa incredibile a chi non gli avesse veduti [...]'. As Branca notes, 'pennati' puns on the near-identity of the term for a scythe-like implement ('pennato'), with an adjective that might be translated 'our feathered friends' ('pennati' or 'pennuti'); that is, 'birds': *Decameron*, ed. Branca, p. 770 and n. 6.

⁷⁵ On arrival at 'Tanna d'India' Odorico sees bats the size of doves ('quine sono li vipistrelli sì grandi come qui sono le colombe'): *Libro delle nuove*, 12, p. 146.

⁷⁶ 'Molte novitadi sono in India sopra le quali io no scrivo, che, se l'uomo no lle vedesse, no lle potrebbe credere': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, 28, p. 161.

⁷⁷ Discussions of this story normally treat it as about language and rhetoric: Larner, *Marco Polo*, p. 127; Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The World at Play in Boccaccio's Decameron* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 63-67.

potentially a wonder to those who have not seen it, and anything may seem wondrous if contextualised as such.

Through Fra Cipolla's oration, Boccaccio indicates that, by the 1350s, the mendicant travel account of the East was a genre sufficiently well-known and well-defined by its own stylistic characteristics to be a fruitful source of humour. Further than this, in a gesture of disbelief in the content and value of travel accounts, he turns the India of travellers and of legend upside down. Subverting the received long-standing 'medieval dream' of India as a land of marvels, riches, spices and Christians, Boccaccio's parody puts forward the notion that India, in the conception of the West, is an imaginative landscape, constructed and reproduced by language and literary practice: a veritable 'Terra di Menzogna'. In Fra Cipolla's 'orazione', that fictional wonderland is turned into its grotesque, burlesque inverse.

7.2.4 The *Recollections* of Friar Odorico⁷⁸

One point of fundamental importance suggested by Fra Cipolla's 'orazione' is that some listeners and readers considered the genre and content of accounts of eastern travel a potentially rich source of comedy. I have shown that this occurs in an isolated instance in Giovanni da Fontana's *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*. I have also pointed to probable evidence for the expectation of laughter as a response to the text at certain points in *Mandeville*, such as the solemn assurance of the gouty, incapacitated ex-traveller that he still feels the benefit of drinking from the fountain of youth, and the ironic misquotation and misuse of biblical quotation on the part of the Lamori islanders in support of free love. In the final section of this chapter, I examine another less widely-known and discussed example of an account of Indian travel acting as an incitement to imaginative and humorous interventions.

Two manuscripts of Odorico's *Libro delle nuove e strane e meravigliose cose*, BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170, formerly of the Dominican convent Santa Maria Nuova, in Florence and Venice, Marciana, It.XI.32, contain an appendix of further chapters that purports to narrate 'many marvellous things that he [i.e., Odorico] had found, seen and heard from people worthy of faith, [...] which are not written in this book either on account of brevity or for *onestà* (prudery), forgetfulness, or other

reasons' but that the anonymous narrator claims to have heard him tell one evening at dinner at San Francesco delle Vigne, a house of the Friars Minor at Venice.⁷⁹ The additional chapters, henceforth termed Odorico's *Recollections* in my discussion, contain, among other additions, the following supplementary story concerning Odorico's encounter with the naked, communally-living people of Lamén (Lamori, Sumatra):

And in addition to what is written in Chapter 20 concerning the island of Lamén, he [Odorico] added and said that [the travellers on the boat] wished to disembark onto the land from the aforementioned boat and to go into an inhabited and heavily populated city, but, doubting whether to disembark because they had heard that they were used to seizing foreign men that they caught there and eating them, they asked the lord of the land for an assurance of good faith. And he sent them his ambassadors. These were men completely naked, wearing no clothes whatsoever. And when they, on reaching the people on the boat, saw them all clothed, for shame of their nudity they placed their sexual organs between their thighs so that they all made *la fica* [an obscene gesture involving the middle and index finger and the thumb] behind. As a result of this, all those on the boat began to laugh.⁸⁰

The base humour in this passage is clearly intended to make its audience laugh. The people that Odorico and his fellow travellers encounter attempt to avoid offending their guests by concealing their genitals, but, in this concealment, accidentally make with their bodies a gross, offensive gesture. Fortunately, the ship's crew sees the funny side, thereby indicating to readers, just in case they remain unamused by the spectacle of these allegedly fierce anthropophages developing such sudden coyness,

⁷⁸ 'le meravigliose cose che'l preditto frate Odorigo avea lassate di fare scrivere': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 179.

⁷⁹ 'Per cagione che'l ditto frate Odorigo disse a bocca molte meravigliose cose ch'avea trovate, vedute e udite [...] le quali no sono scritte in questo libro o per brevità o per onestà o per domenticanza o per altra cagione' [...]: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 179. Full descriptions of the two manuscripts appear in Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 75-76; 79-80. The chapters, sixteen of which appear in the Florence MS and thirteen in the Venetian, are printed as an appendix in the same volume, pp. 179-85. Andreose does not offer a definitive opinion on precisely what these chapters are, only that they are not the authorial additions to Odorico's *Relatio* that they purport to be: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 66.

⁸⁰ 'E sopra quello ch'è scritto nel XX capitolo dell'isola Lamén, aggiunse e disse che, volendo smontare in terra della ditta nave e andare in una città abitata <e> molto popolata, dubitando di smontare perché aveano inteso che pigliavano li uomini strani che vi capitavano e mangiava·li, domandarò fidanza al signore della terra ed elli mandò loro suoi ambasciadori, uomini tutti nudi senza nulla cosa indosso. E venendo elli a lloro sulla nave, vedendoli tutti vestiti, ed ellino per vergogna della loro nudità si missero lo lor membro da generare tra lle cosce sì che facevan la fica dietro; di che tutti quelli della nave cominciaro a ridere': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 180. For the obscene gesture, see Sapegno's notes to Dante's employment of it in the *Inferno*, *Divina commedia*, ed. by Natalino Sapegno (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1985), XXV, 2, p. 280.

how they should react to this anecdote. Indeed, if further confirmation were needed that this passage plays on the potential for comic misunderstanding between alien cultures, this is provided a little later in the same supplementary chapter, when the audience is reminded that once the travellers had disembarked from the ship ‘all the men and women [i.e., of the island] were naked, and they mocked [‘facea<n>si beffe’] those [of the ship] because they were clothed’.⁸¹ The use of the term *beffe* in this anecdote suggests that the travellers’ clothing opened them up to a certain amount of perhaps good-natured mockery and ridicule, and balancing out the laughter caused by the ambassadors’ embarrassment on the ship.⁸²

Odorico’s *Recollections* have been the subject of surprisingly little discussion in the field of travel accounts, a fact that is perhaps due to their problematic nature. Alvise Andreose, the modern editor of the passages, places them in an appendix to his volume, and spends only five pages of his extensive introduction discussing them.⁸³ In his discussion, he observes that ‘much of the information contained in the Appendix also appears in other accounts of eastern travel – in particular in the *Milione* of Marco Polo – or in compilations of an encyclopaedic character [... and] that the anonymous redactor wanted to attribute to Odorico, due to the great authority that he enjoyed, certain supplementary details taken from works of various genres or even heard in person from merchants and travellers, in order to ensure them greater credibility and consideration’.⁸⁴ Just as with the explanation for the existence of the material presented by the text’s redactor and accepted, at least in some measure, by Reichert, however, there are difficulties with this hypothesis.⁸⁵

⁸¹ ‘Viddero che tutti erano nudi i maschi e lle femine, e facea<n>si [*sic*] beffe di loro perché erano vestiti’. The phrase repeats a point made in the relevant chapter of the main text: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 180; 20, p. 155.

⁸² For the term ‘beffa’, see Peter Burke, ‘Frontiers of the Comic in Early Modern Italy, c. 1350-1750’ in *A Cultural History of Humour*, ed. by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 61-75.

⁸³ Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 179-85; discussion at pp. 64-69.

⁸⁴ ‘Diremo [...] che molte delle notizie contenute nell’Appendice compaiono anche in altre relazioni di viaggio in oriente – in particolare nel *Milione* poliano – o in opere di compilazione di carattere enciclopedico [... E] che l’anonimo estensore abbia voluto attribuire ad Odorico, in virtù della grande autorità che egli godeva, alcune notizie supplementari dedotte da opere di vario genere o addirittura udite dalla viva voce di mercanti e viaggiatori, al fine di garantire ad esse maggiore credito e considerazione’: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 66.

⁸⁵ Andreose quotes Sartori and Monaco as arguing for the attribution of the *Recollections* to Odorico as a literary device, but cites Reichert as a supporter of their genuineness. Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, pp. 64-65. In his *Begegnung mit China* Reichert asserts a belief in the authenticity of the

One implication of Andreose's suggestion is that material taken from works of encyclopaedic genres would have been considered of increased authority if attributed to Odorico. If true, this would be an inversion of the pattern of re-use outlined in Chapter 6, part 1 above, according to which it is points of similarity with the accounts of ancient authors that prove the authenticity of travel accounts, rather than the reverse. Particularly problematic, in my view, is, moreover, the suggestion implicit in such arguments that all the anecdotes and information presented in the *Recollections*, including the ribald story retold above, were composed or compiled with serious intent. In fact, the extraordinary heterogeneity of the material the *Recollections* contain contributes to their problematic status. A doubt that the notices were entirely invented is necessarily raised by the details concerning *satī* provided in Recollection IV. Concerning this practice, the compiler notes that 'when she goes to be burned, the wife is dressed and decorated most honourably, all covered with flowers, accompanied by many people. And with many instruments she proceeds, singing and dancing, in the middle of these people until she reaches a square [...]', a description that reads as a plausible outsider's account of a woman dressed for marriage processing to the ceremony.⁸⁶ Additionally, certain other details in the *Recollections* are clearly taken from encyclopaedic sources and other travel accounts. Thus the *Recollections*' addition to Talamasim, an island where giant reeds grow, adds corroborative detail on the size of the reeds which derives from Solinus.⁸⁷ That the notices are entirely truthful and serious cannot, however, be maintained in the light not only of the comic story discussed above, but also in that of several other burlesque ethnographic fictions it contains, such as an account of an unnamed country and its people, amongst whom evil is honoured and he who wishes to marry must first commit a murder. The genitals of the dead man are then

Recollections on the grounds of detail such as that added to Odorico's description of *satī* (see below): p. 168.

⁸⁶ 'Illa moglie quando si va ad ardere è vestita e adornata molto onorevilmente, tutta coperta di fiori, accompagnata da molta gente. E con molti stromenti ella va cantando e ballando in mezo di questa gente fine a una piazza': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, Appendix, IV, p. 180. The reference to ornate clothing and flowers indicates a woman dressed as for her wedding, as was the custom for a *satī*: Anila Verghese, 'Satī: Practice and Representation', p. 120. The description also harmonises with that of Niccolò de' Conti: Poggio, *De l'Inde*, pp. 140-42.

⁸⁷ The detail that the reeds are so large that, if a section is cut from one node to another, it can be used as a boat, appears in Solinus's account of reeds alongside the Ganges (*CRM*, 52: 48) and is not, as Andreose suggests, a misunderstanding ('uno fraintendimento') of a passage of Marco Polo: Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, p. 242.

fashioned into a wedding crown for the bride.⁸⁸ A similar case is the account, elaborated from material concerning Tibet of Polian origin, of a people who attempt to procure foreigners to sleep with their unmarried girls.⁸⁹ This familiar material is given a new twist by an account of Odorico's refusal to participate in the custom on the grounds of his religious vows, as a result of which the *Recollections*' account of this encounter between East and West has clear comic overtones.⁹⁰

The additional chapters of the *Recollections*, then, include, side-by-side, information from a variety of genres and sources, and invented detail calculated to work a variety of effects upon its readers. Certain details in the *Recollections* would no doubt have struck their readers as information of a marvellous but nonetheless factual nature. It is likely that the addition of detail from Solinus to the account of giant reeds in Talamasin was viewed in this way. Certain details would, however, have confirmed in readers' eyes an image of an East functioning, like *Mandeville's* East, as a balancing opposite to the West. Hence the *Recollections*' attribution to Odorico of the statement that the sea between India and India Superior 'is not stormy or changeable like that over here, but on the contrary, is tranquil and beneficent'.⁹¹ The well-visualized description of the widow of Polumbum (Quilon), ornately dressed, and decorated, singing and dancing on the way to her own funeral, would have no doubt performed the function of setting up the East in moral, as well as physical opposition to the West. In contrast, the ribald story of the encounter of western sailors with the islanders of Lamori, the fictional encounter between Odorico and the unspecified people who offer their unmarried women to foreign travellers, and the unspecified country where evil is honoured and the murder and castration of one man by another is rewarded with a bride, all play with the moral, comic and grotesque possibilities of an upside-down world that, in many ways, functions like the Cockaigne supposed at the same time to exist at the far west of the *oekumene*.⁹² The structure of these anecdotes is basic. The compiler, or his source, apparently employing an eyewitness account as an imaginative springboard,

⁸⁸ Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, Appendix, X, p. 182.

⁸⁹ *Milione*, 114, p. 151.

⁹⁰ The comic resonances are noted by Reichert, 'Fremde Frauen', pp. 175-76.

⁹¹ '[...] non è tempestuoso come il nostro di qua, né fortunevole, anzi è tranquillo e bonacevole': Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, Appendix, II, p. 179.

imagines the existence of a world in which what is sinful to himself and his audience — such as nudity or promiscuity — is the norm, and in which their most basic rules — modesty in dress or virginity at marriage — are held in abhorrence. Two of the anecdotes then imaginatively explore the possibilities of encounter between peoples adhering to these oppositional behavioural codes. Indeed, the account of the encounter between the travellers and the Lamori islanders goes yet further. Whereas in Odorico's main text the narrative only details the Lamori islanders laughing at the clothed travellers, the compiler of the *Recollections*, in an apparent attempt to redress the balance, shows the travellers laughing at the islanders. Rather more than a funny story, this episode shows a perceived alliance between power and laughter against the alien, which undoubtedly says rather more about laughter and social and cultural group formation in the compiler's own society than it does about fourteenth-century Sumatra. In the perception of the compiler or author (who cannot be determined), then, any cultural group represented becomes vulnerable to *beffe* at the expense of the other when not dominant, and particularly when not on its home territory.

That the potential the compiler finds in the notion of cross-cultural encounter is primarily comic is significant. It suggests that, within some reading communities, interpretative conventions for travel writing were not limited to the type of pious, orthodox interpretation proposed by the Dominican translator of Marco Polo and apologist for ethnography Francesco Pipino (5.2). Given that the fullest version of the *Recollections* appears, moreover, in a manuscript of almost certain Dominican production, the notion that such apparently unconventional imaginative and comic responses would have been limited to less-educated readers amongst the laity must be discounted at the outset. The *Book of John Mandeville* supports the same point. Produced, as Seymour points out, by someone able to read Latin with access to a well-stocked ecclesiastical library, it has been plausibly suggested that it was the work of a cleric, or a very well-educated layman.⁹³

⁹² Odorico, *Libro delle nuove*, Appendix X, XI, pp. 182-83. For a brief discussion and references on Cockaigne and the literature of inverted worlds see Vasvari, 'The Geography of Escape', pp. 178-92.

⁹³ M. C. Seymour, 'Sir John Mandeville', *Authors of the Middle Ages I*, 27; Deluz suggests that he is a well-read layman: Deluz, *Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville*, pp. 363-64.

The significance of the *Recollections* for the reception of Odorico's account of 'le tre Indie' lies in their unpredictable, multivalent, multi-generic nature. They indicate readers bringing to eyewitness travel accounts a capacity for interpretation that is highly-developed, capable of responding in a variety of ways to a text that functions on a number of levels and, fundamentally, of attributing to the 'tre Indie' a variety of different, concurrently existing and sometimes overlapping meanings.

7.3 Conclusion

The instances of comic and imaginative re-use of accounts of the three Indies examined in this chapter include texts that passed as truthful accounts, such as the *Book of John Mandeville*, and manifest fictions such as Boccaccio's intentionally, overtly and ridiculously false account of Fra Cipolla's journey in search of marvellous relics. As this chapter has shown, however, the variety of types of textual response to and re-use of accounts of eastern travel is as wide and as nuanced as Richard's 'multiform' genre of travel writing itself. The existence of texts that mimic and parody such accounts is, moreover, testimony to the recognition of the eyewitness account of eastern travel, not necessarily related to pilgrimage, as a specific genre.⁹⁴ Fra Cipolla's account of his journey — manifestly and laughably false to the *Decameron's* readers if not to the friar's fictional audience of credulous townspeople — testifies not only to this, but to the recognition of a sub-genre of the travel accounts of friars, whether delivered orally or in writing. The anonymously-authored *Recollections* of Odorico and the genre-dependent joke of Giovanni da Fontana, both from Italy, occupy ambiguous ground. In both cases, the modern reader is at first fooled by certain generic expectations into treating some anecdotes as serious, apparently transparent, accounts. Eventual recognition that the stories are parodic, however, subsequently serves to refocus attention away from the people or place that purports to be the object of the account and onto the genre and the self, its credulous reader. Though the extent to which a modern critical reader's responses to such texts relate to those of their medieval readers is unknowable, I suggest that the disruptive and comic intrusions outlined above are likely to have been read as ambivalent by their early audiences as they are now. Thus, like the linguistic and

⁹⁴ Westrem, *Broader Horizons*, p. 14.

generic jokes of Fra Cipolla's oration, they work to throw into question the notion of the account of eastern travel as a transparently mimetic textual form.

Finally, the incorporation into several of these texts of comic and grotesque anecdotes alongside material of a serious and informative nature also testifies, I think, to an approach to the genre of travel writing and through it to the people and world signified, that resists totalising explanation and interpretation. Instead, the compilers and authors discussed in this chapter appear to have taken an approach that allowed their texts, the places, and the peoples of the wider world that they attempted to represent and understand, to have multiple coexisting meanings and connotations, even to the point, as in Giovanni da Fontana's accounts of Sri Lanka, where those co-existing connotations could incorporate both elevated mystery and scatological comedy.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined patterns and trends in the reception of information from first-hand accounts of India across a range of English, French and Italian sources, concentrating principally on those of Marco Polo and Odorico da Pordenone. The use of a variety of approaches and types of evidence across the three sections of the thesis has allowed me to develop and put forward a nuanced model of the relationship between the context and function of these travel accounts and late medieval constructions of the Indies in the Latin West.

This study shows that it can be profitable to sidestep questions of the original intention behind the composition of travel accounts and to focus upon their eventual functions. The success of Francesco Pipino's piously presented Latin translation of Marco's *Book*, that of the secularised *volgarizzamento* of Odorico's text in the *Memoriale toscano*, and the studious treatment in England of the *Guecelli* redaction of Odorico's *Relatio*, are examples of travel account texts being successfully repackaged for a range of very different communities and functions. Indeed, rather than being determined by authorial intention (whether the author is viewed as the traveller himself or his amanuensis) the way in which these texts were read depended upon their mode of presentation in manuscript, a factor that itself depended upon the interventions of an unknown number of people in any manuscript's production process: a translator or redactor, manuscript commissioner, scribe, rubricator, illustrator, bookseller and, perhaps, institutional librarian or other early, authoritative reader. Reading practices also, however, were influenced by the reading communities in which the texts circulated. This observation can be called upon to help explain for the dominant piously curious and studious mode of marking up manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio*, sometimes otherwise unfurnished with chapter headers and other intertitles, in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. By a variety of marginal interventions, the reading communities in which it circulated, in some instances at least certainly institutional, appear to have turned the work, almost as if by general consensus, into an object of serious study. The same observation may also help to explain the circulation in Italy of scruffier, lower quality, non-professionally produced vernacular copies of both Marco's and Odorico's texts, often produced without paratext, and attracting no readers' marginalia testifying to their function. This pattern of presentation suggests that such manuscripts circulated

amongst the urban communities of readers of lower social status that Petrucci identifies as consumers of the written word who read for leisure, often repeatedly and with attention but ‘without profound comprehension and critical understanding’.¹ Amongst reading communities unschooled in the studious modes of reading exemplified in the English manuscripts of the *Relatio*, scholarly paratexts or annotations would not have been required or desired.

As Dutschke has noted with regard to Marco Polo, however, there is by no means an infallible rule linking language, socio-economic status or ‘estate’ of reader, and type of interpretation as indicated by traces of reading. Exceptions such as the heavily-annotated Tuscan Marco Polo in BNC, II.IV.136, the elegant, Court French Marco Polo in Stockholm M. 304 featuring scholarly Latin annotation, and the late-fifteenth-century Tuscan version of Odorico’s *Relatio* in BAV, Vat. lat. 5256b bearing toponymic annotation in a humanist-influenced hand are cases of readers manipulating and adapting the texts with which they are presented in unexpected, unusual ways.

Scholars of a variety of different approaches have suggested that to read Marco Polo’s *Book* for the mercantile information that it provided was a common mode of use for the work over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.² It is, of course, impossible to show that the *Book* was not used in this way. However, it should be noted that the evidence of the surviving manuscripts does not support the notion that this type of reading was more prevalent than any other. In the majority of marked manuscripts of all types, peoples and their exotic customs are most commonly noted by paratext-authors and annotating readers. Certainly it is also true that exotic products, in particular jewels and spices, are highlighted by paratexts and, in heavily annotated manuscripts, by annotators. In such instances however, it is difficult to argue with any certainty that the interest of the reader or paratext-author concerned is specifically mercantile, rather than in these items as denoting exoticism and riches generally.

¹ Petrucci, ‘Reading and Writing *Volgare*’, pp. 224-25.

² Cattaneo, ‘Il mappamondo’, p. 279. Cattaneo links this suggestion to the hypothesis of F. Borlandi, who has suggested that the existing versions of Marco’s *Book* derive from an earlier version in the form of a mercantile handbook along the lines of Francesco Pegolotti’s *Pratica della mercatura*: ‘All’origine del libro di Marco Polo’, in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, 1, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1962), pp. 107-47.

To support the notion that Marco's *Book* was read for mercantile information specifically, it would, I think, be necessary to find examples of attention being devoted to details such as the major ports of exchange that Marco notes (Hormuz, Cambay, Kayal, Columbum), as well perhaps as details of trade routes for specific items: for example, Marco's information that horses are shipped from 'Curmos, Quisci, Dufar, Escer and Adan' to India.³ The fact that no column space in Table 3 is devoted to 'mercantile geography' reflects the fact that such information is not found either presented or annotated in the manuscripts reviewed here. Indeed, when information of mercantile interest — such as that on spices and wealth discussed above — is prominently presented or noted in both texts, this is normally as part of a careful study of the text from all angles and not a sign of exclusive interest in merchandise and trade.⁴

My examination of evidence for the readership, comprehension, and assimilation of constructions of the Indies both in the physical texts of the two travel accounts under discussion and in their redeployment in other texts has made it possible to draw a number of connecting lines between two aspects of reception normally considered separately. Both types of evidence indicate a range of modes of reception of these travel accounts. On the one hand we find acceptance of the authority of these texts' presentation of the Indies. This is reflected by respectful and consistent annotation of the physical texts, and by accurate, attributed citation in later reworkings. On the other hand, we find occasional evidence of the disagreement with details in the text, or of the 'poaching' of textual details in manuscripts, indicating that a physical text is being read in a way very different to that intended by its author and other agents in its production process. Similarly, with

³ Marco Polo, *Milione*, 174, p. 556.

⁴ The more heavily annotated manuscripts of the *Book* whose notes contain references to products generally contain more notes pertaining to other sorts of detail. Thus the Italian Latin text in BN, 3195 contains fourteen notes relating to products in the relevant section, but 20 relating to ethnographic details. BNC, II.IV.136 and Riccardiana 1924 are Tuscan and Venetian *volgare* manuscripts respectively, both provided with marginal paratext. Both paratexts direct attention to products as one aspect of a wide-ranging reading (see Tables 3 and 5), and in both cases interest in products is likely to be at least as much to do with their exotic as their mercantile characteristics. The paratext of BNC, II.IV.136, for example, points out pepper, flour and wine from trees, pearls, rubies and other precious stones (fols 45v, 46v, 47v, 48r, 48v), but also notes, for instance, the giant birds of Madagascar as 'Griffoni', indicating that his interest is more exotic and marvellous than mercantile.

regard to the redeployment of details from travel accounts, I have shown (in Chapter 6) that there is much evidence of highly interventionist, manipulative uses of eyewitness accounts in some of the texts discussed. Very occasional disbelieving, argumentative notes in manuscripts, such as the ‘non est verum’ of a sophisticated late-fifteenth-century reader of Marco Polo (BAV Ottob. lat. 1641), parallel the rare but nevertheless significant incredulous, ambivalent or parodic literary responses to the very genre of the exotic eastern travel account discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4 has shown how the spatial geography of the Indies is sometimes inconsistently and confusingly presented in the physical texts, even in those versions – such as Pipino’s Polo – that foreground the chorographical aspect of the texts via their chapter headers or those – such as the English manuscripts of the *Relatio* – liberally provided with marginal reading aids. The presentation and annotation of divisions and borders is, when it occurs, similarly inconsistent and often confused. Whilst paratext-authors and readers certainly took geographical information from Odorico’s and Marco’s texts (noting toponyms, products pertaining to places and, occasionally, the position of the pole star) paratexts and traces of reading rarely show evidence of geographical knowledge from other sources being brought to bear on the reading of the texts. Likewise, when the *Book* and the *Relatio* appear in manuscripts with other geographical texts, maps or indeed other legendary texts relating to the Indies, it is very rare to see intertextual connections made by paratext-authors or readers between these different sources of geographical information. A rare cross reference in Cambridge, CCC 407 between conflicting data on the location of the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, given in Odorico’s *Relatio* and in *Mandeville’s Travels* is exceptional here, as is the repeated cross-referencing, relating largely to customs, between Marco’s *Book* and Odorico’s *Relatio* in Arundel 13.

With ‘India’ and the ‘Indies’, whether as a single or multipartite geographical entity, so vaguely defined and, apparently, so vaguely understood in the physical texts under discussion, it is not surprising to find geographical imprecision and confusion in geographical and cartographic texts that redeploy information from these accounts. I have shown how in Pucci’s *Libro di varie storie* the lands ‘beyond India’ become a convenient locus for all that is strange, whether from first-hand travel accounts or from encyclopaedic sources. In the fifteenth-century anonymous

French *Livre des merveilles*, 'India' is an imaginative space to which anything both unknown and topsy-turvy should be attributed. Thus the weaving men of Hus belong to eastern India because, by behaving like women, they act in opposition to western norms.

In the geographical texts that make use of travel accounts, geography is inseparable from ethnography, which is presented as participating in the world's cosmological balance. Often, however, writers, whilst very good at making a binary distinction between 'them' and 'us', are not particularly adept at making nuanced distinctions between distant places, and between the peoples who inhabit them. Considerations of cosmological balance, which themselves necessitate the assigning of meanings to peoples' behaviours, have been shown to influence the placement of peoples and of their countries in Pucci's text, in the *Book of Sir John Mandeville*, in the *Livre des merveilles*, and in Giovanni da Fontana's *Liber de omnibus rebus*. When making distinctions between peoples and places, compilers who re-use travel accounts often misrepresent their sources either wilfully, for the sake of cosmological balance — as is exemplified by Giovanni da Fontana's contrast between the healthy, chaste Brahmans in eastern India and unchaste, sick 'Etiopii' in its west — or carelessly — as in Pucci's repeated mis-attribution of customs and features to places in his summary reworking of Marco's *Book*.

A comparison of the types of reading practices brought to bear on Marco's and Odorico's descriptions of the peoples whom they locate in 'the Indies' and the presentation of Indian peoples by writers and compilers who employ these texts shows considerable similarity between modes of reading for which we have evidence and modes of re-use. The authors of marginal paratext and annotations tend, like the compilers who re-use this material, to show great interest in the religious, social and cultural customs of the peoples that travellers in the East encounter. The pattern of the imprecise location of such peoples by annotators and authors alike indicates that their interest for such readers and users lay in the ontological problems that they posed. The point of reading Marco's and Odorico's descriptions does not appear to have been so much to read accurate descriptions of strange peoples, as to deduce meaning from their existence and behaviours. Pagan depravity may function as a lesson in God's grace; pagan piety as an admonishment; reports of the justice, virtue and generosity of non-Christian kings may likewise have

a poignancy for the reader's own society. Irrespective of Francesco Pipino's stated hope, that the reading of Marco's *Book* may prompt members of religious orders to missionary endeavours, and irrespective of Odorico's text's early circulation amongst an order deeply involved in the eastern missions, there is little evidence from the manuscripts to support the notion that these texts functioned as aids for those engaged in or planning missionary activity, other than functioning as encouragements in the most general sense. The two Digby manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* discussed in Chapter 5 are exceptional here, presented by their remarkable paratexts as works of information about all aspects of the world beyond the borders of Christendom, including the locations of Franciscan convents in the East. Even in these manuscripts, however, explicit or implicit encouragement to missionary activity is not discernible as it is in the margins of the sole surviving copy of Jordanus Catalani's *Mirabilia descripta*.⁵ This observation harmonises closely with the outline of missionary endeavours and the diffusion of information relating to these within the ecclesiastical and missionary hierarchies outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Marco's *Book*, neither in Francesco Pipino's nor any other version, and Odorico's *Relatio* appear not to have been used to further missionary endeavours. The attitude of authors and compilers who re-use this material follows a very similar pattern. Pipino's rationalisation of ethnography as a tool in the work of the propagation of the faith in the East is one aspect of his translation of Marco's *Book* that is almost always lost by the re-users of ethnographic details from his text. Luis de Angulo even goes so far as to quote directly from Pipino's prologue, but, in a move that demonstrates a deeply insular concept of the function of ethnography, excises Pipino's references to the need to bring about the conversion of 'the infidel'. Instead, explicitly for Luis and implicitly in the works of the other re-users of ethnographic details from eyewitness travel accounts, to read a description of the world is to learn about its creator, and the function of the ethnography of non-Christian peoples is to provide a site for interpretation and self-making for western writers and readers.

It has been suggested by several scholars, sometimes with citation of Domenico Silvestri's doubtful treatment of Odorico's *Relatio* (6.2.2.2), or of the

⁵ See 2.2.4, note 80.

comments of Amelio Bonaguisi, the *podestà* of Cerreto Guidi on the ‘incredible things’ that he has copied out in Marco’s *Book*, that peculiarities in the reception of accounts like those of Marco and Odorico may be explained by the fact that readers viewed them as wonder tales rather than as factual accounts.⁶ It has, moreover, also been suggested that the regular binding of Marco’s *Book* with texts such as the Alexander romances resulted in an assimilation of eastern fantasy and reality into a ‘never-never land’.⁷ That travel accounts did indeed elicit very ambiguous reactions from their readers that affected their reception as serious sources of information is attested by the discussion of ambivalent and parodic fictional travel accounts and excerpts in Chapter 7 of this thesis. Such responses suggest that the genre of Indian itinerary was not considered purely mimetic in function by readers. They indicate that writers who re-used material from these accounts were unsure as to how to read and thus how to present this material, and furthermore, that writers sometimes felt it appropriate to allow such accounts to have contradictory and co-existing functions and meanings, with the result that they hovered, for their contemporaries, in an indeterminate limbo between *mimesis* and symbolism.

On maps, the introduction of Ptolemy’s *Geographia* into the Latin West had more of an immediate and significant impact upon the West’s image of India than did the travel accounts discussed here. Ptolemy’s text provided a framework for understanding the cosmological and spatial relationship between India and the West and also a means of conceptualising the shape of the coastline between the Indus and southern China. This allowed cartographers to hypothesise locations for all the ports mentioned in Marco’s *Book*, Odorico’s *Relatio* and, later, Poggio’s *India*. It also allowed cartographers to attempt to spatialise the relationship between the inland areas of India, less well represented in the earlier, coast-bound travel accounts, and the better-known port cities of the south and the islands of Indonesia.

Developments in the cartographic representation of Southern and South East Asia on the maps discussed in this thesis are perhaps indeed best seen as resulting not so much from the integration into their design of information from first-hand

⁶ Critchley, *Marco Polo’s Book*, p. 137. Dutschke concludes that in fact a good number of medieval readers treated Marco’s *Book* with trust, but cites Amelio Bonaguisi’s reference to ‘cose incredibili’ as an example of contemporary disbelief: ‘Francesco Pipino’, pp. 95-96.

⁷ Larner, paraphrasing Cesare Segre, ‘Marco Polo’, p. 111.

accounts as from a slow alteration of the function of the world map from the representation of historical and theological cosmology, to a function that included spatial knowledge and cartographic speculation, which then resulted in the integration of first-hand information. It is, in my view, a gradual dissociation of geography from its past that makes possible the change in the conception of the East that so distinguishes the later medieval transitional world maps discussed in this thesis from their textual counterparts in the late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *descriptiones orbis*.

It is, conversely, the continuation of tradition in the textual representation of India and the East that governs the modes of re-use that have been shown to dominate in the cosmological texts examined in Chapter 6 of this thesis, and that therefore determines the peculiar characteristics of the constructions of the Indies in such texts. As I have shown in Chapter 6, information taken from first-hand travel accounts is redeployed in such texts using a range of citation methods. John of Tynemouth and, in one section of his work, Antonio Pucci, cite Marco Polo's *Book* wholesale, without attempting to integrate the work into the *descriptiones orbis* that they present elsewhere in their works. On occasion the works are cited more selectively: Pucci in his *descriptio orbis* cites Odorico da Pordenone selectively and silently; Domenico Silvestri cites Marco Polo selectively, but with attribution; Luis de Angulo and the anonymous author of the *Livre des merveilles* both cite selectively, the former silently; the latter with attribution, but with the Friar Odorico recast as a learned doctor. In both these last instances, the sources are silently manipulated. In many of the cases of selective and attributed use discussed, opinions or factual reports are wrongly attributed to the travellers, the result of which is often, as in Domenico Silvestri's classicising account of Marco's Pentain (Indonesia), to emphasise similarities between information from first-hand travel accounts and that from classical sources. To revert to Umberto Eco's extended sartorial metaphor for understanding notions of re-use in the Middle Ages, the type of selective use of details from eyewitness accounts may be understood as akin to patchworking. Repeatedly it seems that the details that are selected from travel accounts for re-use in cosmological and encyclopaedic works appear to have been selected on the basis of their similarity with elements from the existing traditional marvels of India. Thus Giovanni da Fontana, compiling information on the islands of the East in the mid-

fifteenth century, works associatively, contextualising details from first-hand accounts of Sri Lanka amongst stories from the Alexander legends. Regularly, as is the case with Silvestri's manipulation of Marco's Pentain and his overt assertion that Marco's East is similar to that described in ancient authorities, we see details that travellers provide concerning the East manipulated to bring them closer to what was already known about this part of the world. Not unlike patchworkers, the compilers of the texts discussed in 6.2.2 often select carefully from their eyewitness sources to ensure a match between the new material and the old. If the new material does not quite match as it is, then it can be altered, sometimes successfully and sometimes less so, in an attempt to ensure that the seam between old and new is smooth. In their redeployment of the first-hand accounts of new authorities, the aim of the cosmological texts discussed here appears not to be to disrupt the traditional construct of the East that they inherited, but to complement it, shore it up and strengthen it with newer but, ultimately, similar details. Thus whilst the detail of the representations of India contained in late-medieval texts may change, the general shape of the picture remains the same.

With these observations, I return to the problem set out in the introduction to this thesis, that of the apparent stagnation in constructions of India noted by so many critics. This thesis has, I think, provided answers to some questions raised by this problem. I suggest that the imaginative geography of the Indies, by the late thirteenth century so firmly embedded in western consciousness with all the authority of endless repetition and citation, governed not so much what European travellers saw on their Eastern itineraries, as Partha Mitter has posited in relation to European responses to Indian art, but instead determined which elements from their travel accounts were more likely to be selected, redeployed and emphasised in later texts.⁸ It is this pattern of redeployment that makes difficult if not impossible the construction of empirical geographies or ethnographies of the East from the first-hand accounts of travellers.

⁸ Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, pp. 1-31 (esp. p. 5).

Appendices

Appendix 1

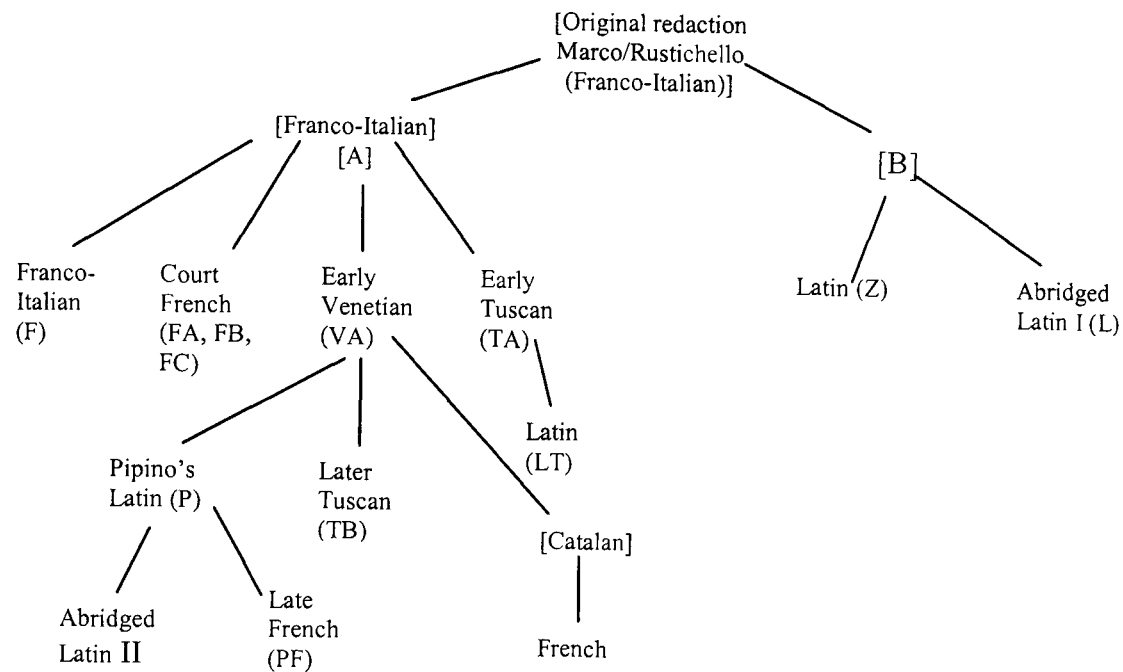


Figure 1: Simplified *stemma* for Marco Polo's *Book*

Simplified *stemma* showing the relationships between the main versions of Marco's *Book* discussed in this thesis.¹ Unclassified fragments, post-1500 textual traditions and traditions outside England, France and Italy are excluded. The generally accepted sigla of Benedetto, as extended by Dutschke, appear where available in parentheses.

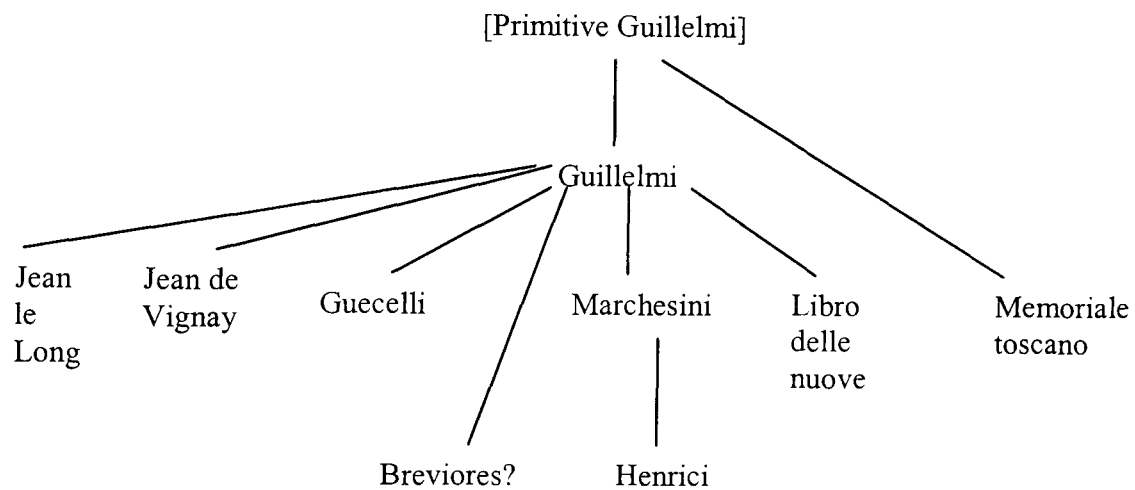


Figure 2 Simplified *stemma* for Odorico's *Relatio*

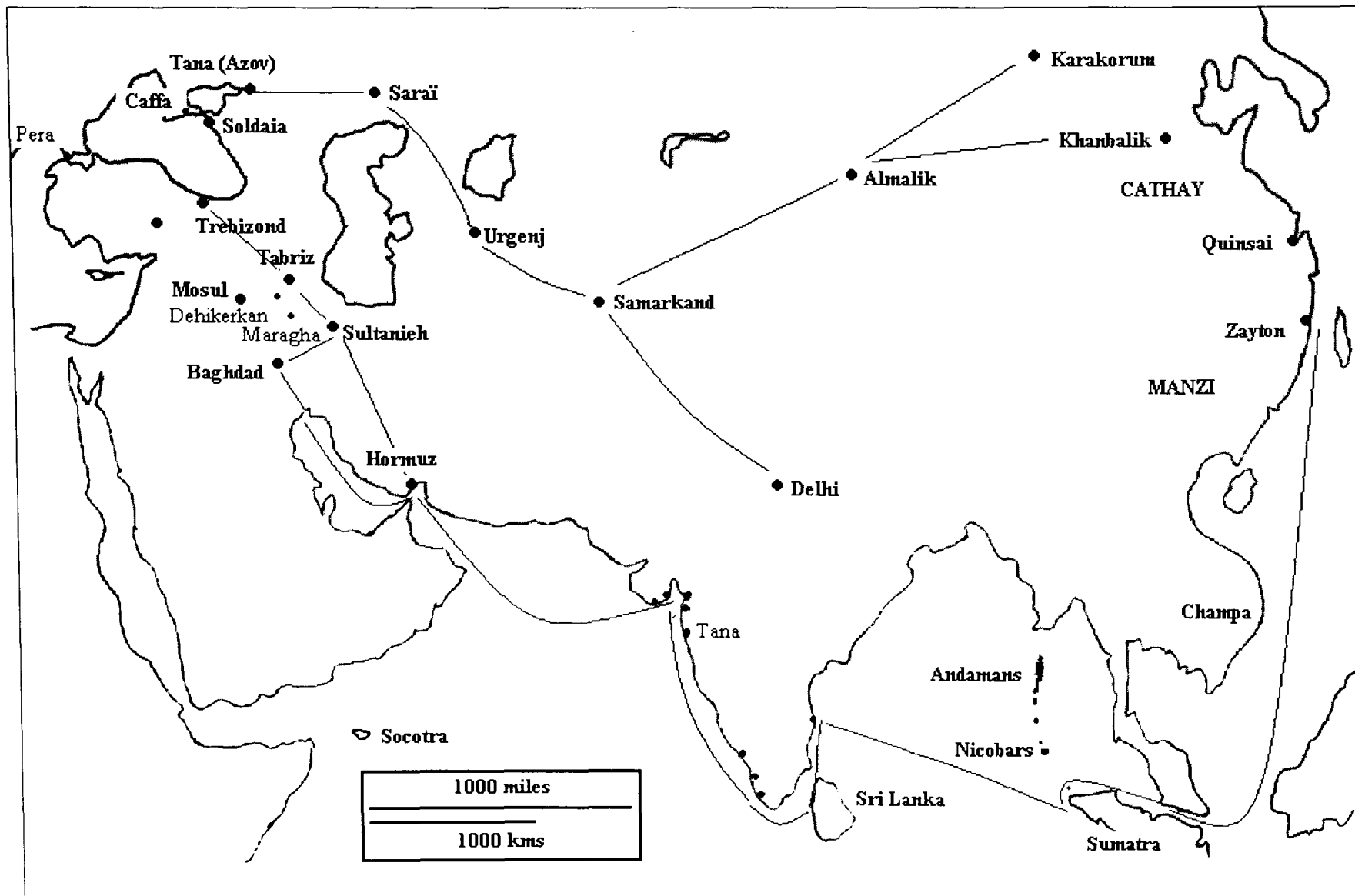
Simplified *stemma* of the main versions of Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio* referred to in the thesis. Post-1500 traditions are excluded. '?' indicates uncertain origin.

Textual versions no longer extant indicated in [brackets]

¹ Following in part Christine Gadrat, 'Les Traductions latines de Marco Polo', paper delivered at the International Medieval Congress (University of Leeds, 10-13 July 2006). Gadrat's doctoral thesis on the Latin manuscripts of the *Book* is currently in progress at the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des Textes, Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique, Paris.

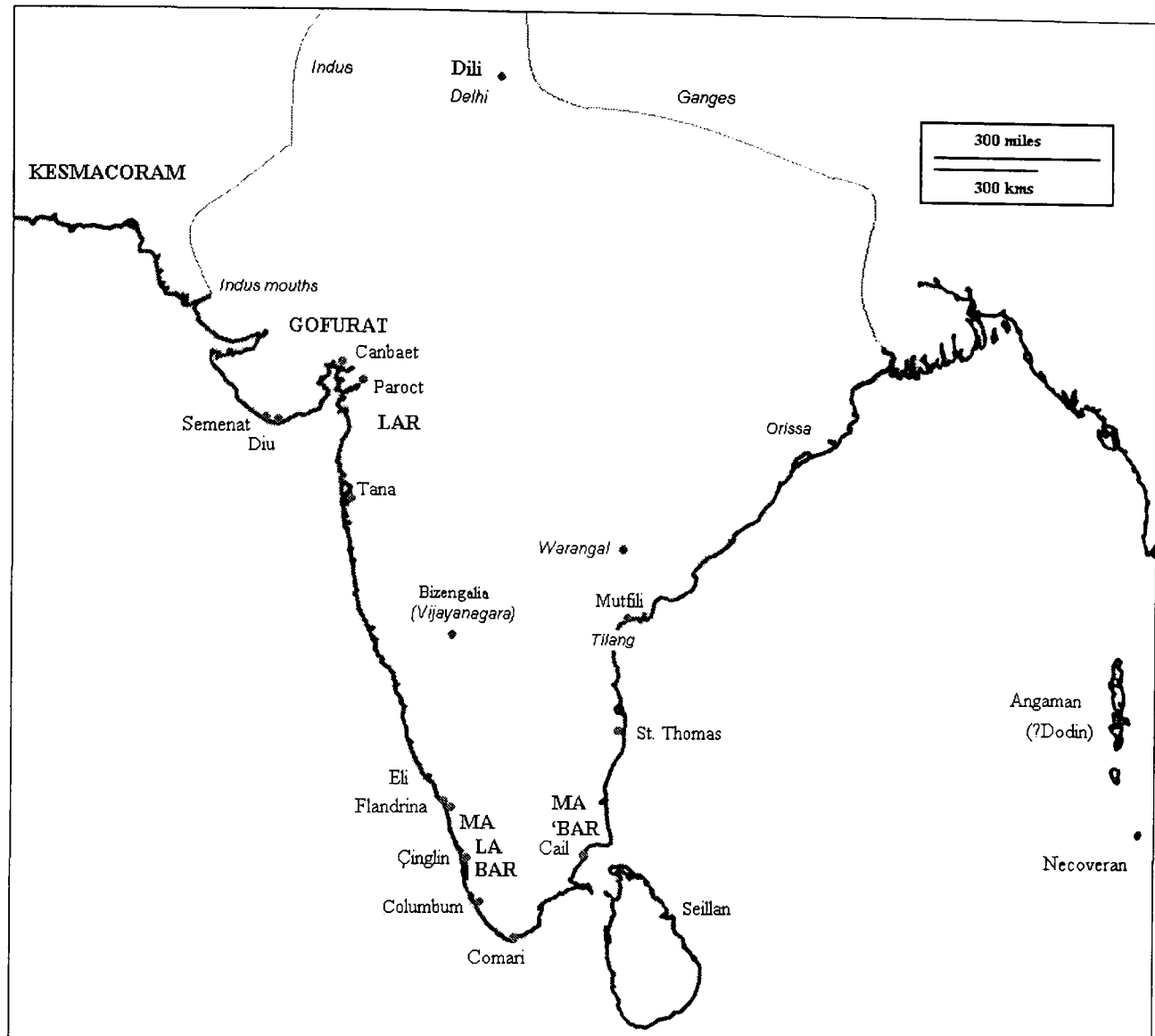
Appendix 2, Map 1

Sketch map of land and sea trade routes between Europe and Asia, with notable ports of exchange marked with a large dot. Smaller locations of significance discussed in the thesis are marked with smaller dots.



Appendix 2

Map 2

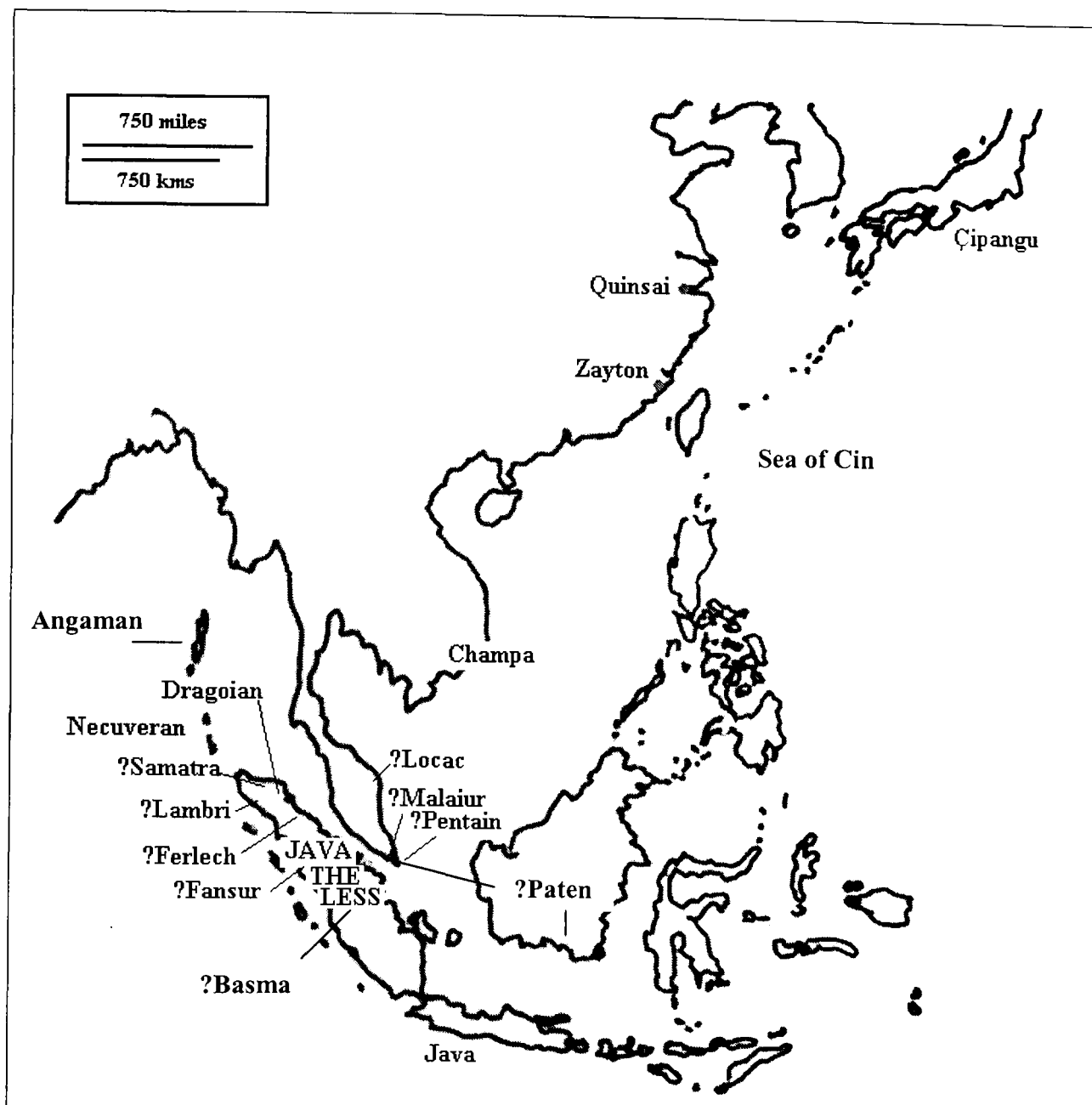


Map 2
South Asian locations mentioned in travellers' accounts with medieval toponyms.

Medieval toponyms are in Roman type; modern toponyms are given in *Italic Arial*.

Appendix 2

Map 3



Map 3

South East Asian mainland and island toponyms referred to in first-hand travel accounts. Conjectural identifications are indicated with ‘?’

Major variants:

- Lamori for Lambri (Odorico)
- Thalmasin for Paten (Odorico)
- Dodyn/Dondin for ?Andaman (Odorico)

Appendix 3: Tables

3.1 Notes to Tables 1 and 2

The following tables contain selected information relating to manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* and Marco's *Book* culled from a variety of published and unpublished sources and supplemented, in the case of manuscripts examined in person, by my own observation (distinguished by the call number in **boldface** in the manuscript sources list in the bibliography).¹ The tables are not intended to provide full codicological information on the manuscripts. Rather, they are intended to present selected information from which some general trends in the reception of the two works may be deduced, as presented in Chapter 3. The information tabulated is thus not comprehensive, and solely incorporates certain details of more or less direct relevance to the general survey in Chapter 3, the purpose of which is to contextualise the more detailed discussions of aspects of presentation and reception in Chapters 4 and 5. Where a particular piece of information is not available for a particular manuscript, and I have not been able to supplement this by viewing the manuscript in question, or application to the holding library, the relevant box is left blank. I have attempted to be as consistent as possible in the presentation information such as dates and scripts, but such an endeavour is hampered by the variety of often undefined terminologies employed in handlists and catalogues.

¹ For the manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book*, my primary source of information is the exhaustive handlist and descriptive catalogue of manuscripts of the work produced by Consuelo Wager Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino'. In the case of Odorico's *Relatio*, I have employed the basic handlist of known manuscripts compiled by Testa, 'Bozza per un censimento'. This has then been supplemented where possible with the more detailed information on Italian vernacular manuscripts provided by Lucio Monaco in 'I volgarizzamenti' and Alvisé Andreose's introduction to his edition of Odorico's, *Libro delle nuove*. Information on the Latin versions of the *Relatio* derives from Paulo Chiesa, 'Per un riordino', and the often patchy information supplied by the relevant manuscript catalogues for each library, listed in the bibliography. The relevant library catalogues and the descriptions provided in *Cathay II* and D. A. Trotter, *Les Merveilles de la terre d'Outremer*, have been employed for the French manuscripts of the *Relatio*. The Bibliothèque municipale of Besançon, the Bibliothèque de la Ville in Saint-Omer, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana and the Biblioteca Archievoscovile (Udine) all supplied information on request. The catalogues and handlists employed present considerable variation in the quality and level of detail that they provide concerning details ranging from hand, rubrication, and marginalia. This inconsistency is reflected in the lacunae in certain sections of the tables, where I have been unable to source information. Finally, in the case of the manuscripts of both texts, published information has where possible been verified or supplemented by examination of manuscripts. Items distinguished by a **boldface** entry in the List of Manuscripts that opens the bibliography (analysed in tables 5-8) were personally examined for this thesis.

Tables 1 and 2 give brief codicological details for all currently localisable, non-fragmentary manuscripts of Marco's *Book* and Odorico's *Relatio* relevant to this thesis (that is, produced between 1300 and 1500 in the Italian States, the Francophone Continent, and England). In the next section, I briefly outline the significance of the features that I have chosen to set out, and detail the methods employed in their categorisation.

3.1.1 Categorisation conventions

3.1.1.1 Size

The size of a manuscript closely relates to its intended audience and intended or actual function. Whilst it is broadly true that large books, with well-spaced script, were generally more expensive to produce than smaller volumes, a direct correlation between size, production values and socio-economic status of readers cannot be assumed. Small books were easily transportable and suitable for a variety of readers wishing to be able to read in a variety of locations, and began to become fashionable in courtly circles in the mid-fourteenth century.² In the early fifteenth century in Italy, moreover, the small or medium format became the preferred choice for scholarly humanist texts written in the newly-developed humanistic bookhand.³ Large books could not normally be read without a book support apparatus of some kind, and consequently were more likely to be produced and read institutionally.⁴ Very large and splendid vernacular books also functioned as status-symbols and as symbolic gifts in noble and courtly contexts.⁵

Categorisation of manuscripts from different regions and traditions of production on the grounds of size necessarily involves a certain amount of fairly arbitrary judgement. For the sake of consistency with others working in related fields, I follow the practice of Rhiannon Daniels, who, basing her categorisation on Armando Petrucci's practice, categorises a book of 320 mm or over in height as

² Saenger, 'Reading in the Later Middle Ages', p. 141; Petrucci, 'Reading in the Middle Ages', p. 141.

³ Petrucci, 'Reading in the Middle Ages', pp. 141-42.

⁴ Petrucci, 'Reading in the Middle Ages', p. 137. But Petrucci also identifies high-quality Italian 'register books', of large format produced for lay patrons: 'Reading and Writing *Volgare*', 183.

⁵ For example, the well-known *Livre de Merveilles* given by Jean sans Peur to his Uncle, the Duc de Berry in 1413, now BN, f. fr. 2810.

large, 240-319 mm as medium sized and up to 239 mm as small.⁶ Whilst I use the same sizing boundaries, I make two amendments. Firstly, measurements are taken or rounded to the nearest 5 mm, as a guide size only is necessary for my purposes. Secondly, for manuscripts whose size is within 20 mm of the upper or lower limit to, I have added a '+' or '-' as appropriate, in order to give an idea of whereabouts in the size category each manuscript sits.

3.1.1.2 Date

Where colophons or other paratext make it possible I give precise dates for manuscripts. The precision of dating supplied is, however, variable depending on the source of the information. In cases where the date of production can only be securely assigned to a century, this is given in arabic numerals. Where more precise dating is possible this is given as precisely as the manuscript's level of cataloguing allows. Following any date, 'in', signifies start; 'mid' the middle and 'end' the close of any given century; 1/4 signifies the first quarter, 2/4 the second of any given century, and so on.

3.1.1.3 Support

The manuscripts discussed in this thesis were written either on animal membrane (designated 'parchment' here) or paper. Parchment was difficult and costly to produce, but was the only option in Europe until the 1300s when, with the establishment of paper mills first in Italy, then in France, then spreading across Christian Europe over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the cheaper alternative of paper steadily became more commonly used.⁷ Because a higher quality of calligraphy and decoration was possible on good quality, well prepared parchment than was possible on paper in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this more costly and durable support continued to be used for many books well beyond the end of the fifteenth century. Such books, for which durability and quality of calligraphy and decoration were important, included high-status courtly

⁶ Rhiannon Daniels, 'Reading and Meaning', p. 127; Petrucci, 'Reading and Writing *Volgare* in Medieval Italy', p. 181.

⁷ For this summary I rely upon Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 12.

vernacular books, high-status manuscripts of works valued in learned and aristocratic humanist circles, and ecclesiastical books.

In the following tables, support is divided into the categories ‘parchment’ (‘parch’) and ‘paper’ only, with no attempt to distinguish the type of animal skin used in the former case. Where the information is available, particularly high quality, fine parchment is indicated with ‘FQ’; low quality (i.e., coarse, poorly-prepared, holed or uneven) with ‘LQ’.

3.1.1.4 Script

The purpose of the categorisation of a manuscript’s script in the following tables is to give an indication of its production quality and status. For this reason, the categories employed are, once again, broad, the aim of the tables not being to identify or to describe any of the individual hands encountered, but merely to categorise these for analytical purposes. Because the terminology employed in categorising scripts is highly variable I give a brief outline encompassing terms used in this thesis and tables.

Italy

The categories of Italian scripts employed in the copying of manuscripts of texts under discussion here are rounded gothic, *cancelleresca*, *mercantesca*, humanistic bookhand and humanistic cursives. The gothic and humanistic bookhands, though they occur in varying grades, are the formal hands of trained professionals in the former case, and of trained professionals and bibliophiles in the latter. Italian gothic (*gotica rotunda*), was the dominant script in monastic manuscript production throughout the Italian peninsula during the fourteenth century. For much of the century, however, it also had an important role in the production of the Franco-Italian display manuscripts circulating amongst the northern Italian courts.⁸ Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the clear, largely unabbreviated and well-spaced script termed by its proponents *lettera antica* and by modern scholars ‘humanistic

⁸ Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 127-36; Petrucci, ‘Reading and Writing *Volgare*’, p. 179. An example of the use of *gotica rotunda* in an elegant vernacular production of Rustichello da Pisa’s *Giron le Courtois* appears in *Dix siècles de l’enluminure italienne*, ed. by Yolanta Zaluska and others, (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1984), no. 82.

bookhand' was developed.⁹ Over the first half of the fifteenth century, the humanistic bookhand became a high-status script favoured by scholars and their noble patrons. The development of this rather spatially uneconomical and slowly-written script was, however, soon followed by Niccolò Niccoli's innovative humanistic cursive, later termed 'italic'. This latter script, spatially economical, clear, and more swiftly written, is often found in the less formal contexts of correspondence, personal writing and annotation: in Wardrop's words, '[i]nformality is the keynote of Italic; rapidity its virtue; utility its aim'.¹⁰ Later in the century, it came to be used as a bookhand, and, in its elegant and formal variants, a higher status-bookhand.¹¹

Two alternative ranges of scripts, also commonly employed in the copying of the texts under discussion here, particularly in *volgare* are commonly known as *cancelleresca* and *mercantesca*. Concerning the former, a documentary script, Federici has pointed out that 'we cannot identify a single type of *cancelleresca* writing, with unchanging, specific characteristics'.¹² Although, as is apparent from Federici's work, far from all Italian *cancellerie* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries employed scripts in the *cancelleresca* range, it is nevertheless a useful umbrella term, generally indicating a formal script, with hooked ascenders, a generally spiky or angular appearance and cursive characteristics such as the single-celled 'a' and looped 'd'.

The range of hands discussed under the banner *mercantesca* is of disputed origins, and the term of disputed use. As Federici has pointed out, hands of this type are employed, for example, in *cancelleresche* contexts.¹³ *Mercantesca* first appears in documents created by and for business people in thirteenth-century Florence, from which region it spread steadily throughout the Italian peninsula and Sicily.¹⁴

⁹ Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 145. An overview with references appears in Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism*, pp. 5-11

¹⁰ Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism*, p. 11.

¹¹ Wardrop's *The Script of Humanism* traces the formalisation of the script over the course of the fifteenth century and includes many helpful plates. See in particular pp. 19-35 on Bartolomeo Sanvito.

¹² 'non possiamo identificare un tipo di scrittura cancelleresca unico, con caratteri peculiari costanti': *La scrittura delle cancellerie Italiane*, I, (p. 80). This very general overview is based the outline, identifications and plates in Federici's *La scrittura*, in particular pp. 33-58, pp. 75-81.

¹³ For example, in Genoa, Milan, Modena and Parma: Federici, *La scrittura*, p. 81.

¹⁴ For the development and spread of *mercantesca* script, with examples, see Elena Cecchi, 'Nota di paleografia commerciale (per i secoli XIII – XVI)', in *Documenti per la storia economica dei secoli*

Rhiannon Daniels notes that ‘literary manuscripts copied by readers such as artisans and shopkeepers, who had attended an *abbaco*, but had little contact with official book culture often used *mercantesca*’.¹⁵ Irrespective of its utilitarian, mercantile origins, however, *mercantesca* developed, in the use of some practitioners over the *Quattrocento*, into an attractive, formal script.¹⁶ It is consequently important for the purposes of this thesis where possible to distinguish high-grade — well-formed, regular, widely spaced — *mercantesca* (‘HQ’) from the lower grades that are more cramped, of variable spacing and of poor execution (‘LQ’).

France

Throughout the fourteenth century and into the early fifteenth century, the dominant hand in which manuscripts of Marco’s *Book* and Odorico’s *Relatio* are produced is the formal *gothic textura* (tabulated here as ‘gothic’), a script specific to formal book production and used both for ecclesiastical and institutional manuscripts, and for high-quality professionally produced books for lay readers. Qualitative variations occur in this hand, which has by some been divided into *lettera textualis formata* and *lettera textualis*, the former being ‘the calligraphy of choice for the transcription of large-format liturgical books’, and the latter a ‘less careful version than the former [...] that is usually reserved for the “ordinary, well-produced book”’.¹⁷ In the section that follows these shall be simply indicated with ‘HQ’ and ‘LQ’ where known and appropriate.

Faster-written cursive versions of gothic and charter-hands also appear and are widely-employed as bookhands for scholarly, institutional and also for literary texts in the Francophone regions in the fourteenth century, although, as the following tables indicate, these are little-used in the production of the manuscripts under review here.¹⁸ In the tables that follow, these forms will simply be designated as

XIII-XVI, ed. by Federigo Melis (Florence: Olschki, 1972), pp. 563-75 (in particular pp. 565-67 for the earliest contexts of the script).

¹⁵ Rhiannon Daniels, ‘Reading and Meaning’, p. 121.

¹⁶ See Gianfranco Orlandelli, ‘Osservazioni sulla scrittura mercantesca nei secoli XIV e XV’, in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri*, 3 vols, (Naples: L’Arte, 1959) I, 445-60 (p. 456)

¹⁷ *Littera textualis formata* is ‘la calligraphie que l’on choisit de préférence pour transcrire les livres liturgiques de grand format’, whereas *littera textualis* is the ‘version moins soignée de la précédente et que l’on réserve habituellement pour ‘le livre ordinaire de bonne facture’: Jacques Stiennon and Geneviève Hasenohr, *Paléographie du Moyen Age* (Paris: Colin, 1973), p. 119.

¹⁸ Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, 140-41; termed *littera textualis currens* by Stiennon and Hasenohr, *Paléographie du Moyen Age*, pp. 119-20. These cursives appear commonly in marginalia.

‘cursive’, with the designation ‘HQ’ for more decorative or *formata* cursives and ‘LQ’ for the most basic, scruffily-written versions of this hand range.

Beginning in the later fourteenth century, there develops in France and subsequently in its areas of influence a *lettera cursiva* and a *lettera cursiva formata* usually known in English as ‘secretary’.¹⁹ Lower quality versions of this script are more current, with poorer distinction between fine hair strokes and broad strokes and indeed between individual letters. The *formata* version is, by contrast, ‘careful’, exhibiting ‘stylised’ cursive characteristics.²⁰ Towards the middle of the century, the range of hands commonly designated ‘bâtarde’ develops, taking the single-celled ‘a’, the long ‘s’ and ‘d’ from the *cursiva*, but rejecting its looping tendencies.²¹ Within the general range of ‘bâtarde’ scripts, however, there is some temporal, regional and qualitative variation. The attached tables do not attempt distinguish between varieties. Where possible, qualitative differences are as always indicated with a ‘HQ’ or ‘LQ’ in the following tables. Other mixed hands from this period and area will, in order to avoid confusion with ‘bâtarde’, be termed hybrid or mixed.

England

The scripts that feature in the English manuscripts of the travel accounts under review here tend to be formal gothic bookhands for very high quality institutional or courtly lay manuscripts, and *anglicana*, the cursive developed from chancery script into a bookhand. I follow Parkes’ definition of *anglicana* as an umbrella term that encompasses both the formal court hands of cursive origin and their more basic, unadorned relatives that employ fundamentally the same letter forms.²² Some high-quality manuscripts were produced in *anglicana formata*, a hooked script which features carefully formed feet to its minims, and often also extended ascenders on its top line.²³ At the other end of the scale, however, some manuscripts are written in a basic cursive *anglicana*, lacking the more formal and decorative characteristics of

¹⁹ M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. xix-xx. The following descriptions and outline relies primarily upon Stienon and Hasenohr, *Paleographie du Moyen Âge*, pp. 120-21. Stienon and Hasenohr give an example of a *cursiva formata* (‘secretary’ of high quality) at p. 273. See also Gabriel Audisio, Isabelle Bonnot-Rambaud, *Lire le français d’hier: manuel de paléographie moderne, XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Colin, 1997), p. 129; p. 206 (*formata* and normal *cursiva* respectively).

²⁰ Stienon and Hasenohr, *Paleographie du Moyen Age*, p. 120.

²¹ Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 143.

²² Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, p. xvi.

²³ Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pp. xvi- xvii and plates 4-6.

the *formata* script.²⁴ In manuscripts of the later fourteenth-century a final variant of the *anglicana* family of scripts emerges. Termed by Parkes *bastard anglicana*, it unified the cursive letter forms of *anglicana* with the formal spacing, appearance and, later, biting of *textura*, and was reserved for ‘de luxe manuscripts’ and ‘display purposes’.²⁵ For ease of reference, the high-grade *anglicana* hands will simply be referred to in the tables as ‘HQ’. Exceptionally scruffy varieties are identified as ‘LQ’. Some versions of the script more than others retain documentary characteristics: these are identified as ‘doc. infl.’

The distinctive and elegant fifteenth-century English ‘bastard secretary’ hand does not make an appearance amongst the hands represented in the fifteenth-century manuscripts under review here. In some manuscripts, however, the influence of the administrative French ‘*lettera cursiva*’ or ‘secretary’ hand is clear. These instances shall be indicated as either ‘sec’, or ‘sec. infl.’ as appropriate.²⁶

It is necessary, finally, to end with a caveat that in practice a great many hands encountered in manuscript work are mixed, or, in respect of the lowest rank of manuscript production or annotation, of such basic construction as to be categorisable only with the greatest difficulty. In addition to the range of categories outlined above, then, graded where appropriate with ‘LQ’ and ‘HQ’, I (and sometimes the catalogues used here) also employ the categories ‘mixed’, and the qualifier ‘influenced’ (‘infl.’), in order to indicate occasions when a hand may have some, but not all characteristics of an identified script.

3.1.1.5 Decoration

This categorises the level of decoration in any given manuscript. ‘Very high’ is used to indicate the presence of figurative decoration in colour AND the use of gold leaf. ‘High’ indicates the use of figurative decoration in colour OR gold leaf. ‘Medium’ indicates the use of multi-line coloured and/ or well-decorated or filigreed initials. ‘Low’ indicates the use of only basic and small one-colour initials. ‘NC’ is employed to indicate — where this information is available — a scheme of decoration that was planned but not executed or completed. ‘None’ indicates no decorative components.

²⁴ Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pp. xvi- xvii and plate 1 (ii).

²⁵ Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, p. xviii and plates 7-8.

²⁶ On the development of French-influenced secretary hands in England, see Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pp. xix-xxi and plates 9-10.

3.1.1.6 Companion pieces

The aim of this category is simply to provide an impression of the range of manuscript contexts in which the accounts under examination here circulated, as manuscript context is only discussed in certain cases (for example, when there is cross-referencing between texts) in this thesis. Categorisation of type of companion pieces is necessarily a subjective and impressionistic decision. Volumes in which no clear principle of selection or thematic similarity is evident are categorised as ‘miscellanies’ (‘misc.’). ‘Geog’ indicates the presence of texts such as those discussed in 1.2. ‘Travel’ simply indicates other examples of the travel account genre. ‘Topography’ might include, for example, texts such as the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* or Gerald of Wales’ *Topographia hibernica*. ‘Marvels/ legends’ indicates texts such as those indicated in 1.2.2. ‘East-history’ indicates texts such as Jacques de Vitry’s *Historia hierosolymitana* and Het’um’s *Historia orientis* that show interest in the political history of Outremer or the further East. Composite manuscripts whose date of compilation cannot be placed before 1500 feature ‘composite –non relevant’ (‘comp. NR’) in this box.

3.1.1.7 Ownership evidence

Where details are available I have included evidence of early ownership (i.e., prior to 1500) from ownership marks, colophons and library catalogues.

Appendix 3, Table 1: Marco Polo's *Book*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript Code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (to c. 1500)
Italian States: c. 1300-1400 <i>volgare</i>								
14 in	BN, f. fr. 1116	F-I	gothic	med+	parch	low	none	
14 early	BNC, II.IV.88	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	none	none	Piero del Riccio 1458
1391	Ashburnham 525	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	low	none	
14 late	Ashburnham 534	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	gothic	med	paper	med	none	Piero Peruzzi (?post 16c)
1392	BNC, II.II.61	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	mixed cursive	med	paper	none	misc	Amelio Bonaguisis, Podestà of Cerreto Guidi
14 early	BNC, II.IV.136	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	<i>merc.</i>	med+	paper	none	misc	
14 end	BNC, Pal. 590	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	none	none	
14	BN, f. ital. 434	<i>volg</i> (Tu)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	med	none	Messere Petre de Celano (Abruzzi)
Italian States: c. 1300-1400 Latin								
14 late	Ambrosiana X.12. sup.	Lat.	gothic cursive & BH	small	parch	med	east/ history	
14 2/4	Estense 131	Lat.	gothic	small	parch	low-med	none	Estense (from 1436)
14 end	Lucerne, Misc. 5.4	Lat.	gothic	small+	parch	high	none	
14 end	Ferrara, Cl.II.336	Lat.	gothic	med	paper	low	none	15: Bartolomeo Carri (serving Borso d'Este)
14 late	BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170	Lat.	gothic	med-	paper	high	travel; topography inc. Odorico	Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1489
14 mid-1	Paris, BN lat. 3195	Lat.	mixed	med	parch	none	comp misc. (inc.French-produced Odorico)	
14-15	Wolfenbüttel, Gud. lat. 3	Lat.	chancery book (German)	large	parch	high	geography	
Italian States: c. 1400-1500 <i>volgare</i>								
15 mid	Berlin, Ham. 424	<i>volg</i>	mixed; careful	small	paper		comp. NR	
1445	Padua, CM 211	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	low	none	Vetturi family (possibly owner copied)
15-16c	Bern 557	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	cursive- hum.	small	paper	low	none	
15 4/4	Ashburnham 770	<i>volg</i>	cursive- hum. infl.	small	paper	low	none	
1425	BNC, Magl. XIII.73	<i>volg</i>	cursive- <i>merc.</i> infl	med	paper	none	misc. vernacular	Doffo Spini, Podestà of Montaione; Gachinnoto d'Adonardo de Bardi
15 early	Riccardiana 983	<i>volg</i>	gothic minuscule	small	paper	med	none	

Appendix 3, Table 1: Marco Polo's *Book*: Codicological summary

Italian States: c. 1400-1500 <i>volgare</i>								
Date	Manuscript Code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (to c. 1500)
15 early	Riccardiana 1924	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	<i>canc.</i>	large -	paper	low	none	
1457	BL, Sloane 251	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	<i>merc.</i> (LQ)	med	paper	none	none	
1465	Lucca 1296	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	BH - <i>canc.</i> infl	small	paper	high	none	
15 end	Mantua 488	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	cursive- hum. infl.	med	paper	low/med	travel; topography	
15	Parma, Pal. 318	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	BH - hum.	small+	paper	low; NC	none	
15 late	Rome, S.A. Falconieri, 56	<i>volg</i>	cursive- hum. infl.	med	paper	low	very varied misc.	
1493	Seville, Seminario MS	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	BH - hum.	med	paper	med/ low	none	Maese Rodrigo, founder of Seville Univ. (1444-1509)
15 late	BAV, Chigi lat. M.VI 140	<i>volg</i>	cursive - mixed	small+	paper	low	none	
15 late	Marciana, It. VI.56	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	BH- hum	med	paper	low; NC	travel; topography	
1439 and 1446	Correr, Donà dalle Rose 224	<i>volg</i> (Ven)	cursive- hum.	med+	paper	low	Petrarch	
Italian States c. 1400-1500 Latin								
1407/8	Berlin, lat. qu. 618	Lat.	humanist	small	paper	low; NC	travel; topography	
15- mid	Naples, Vindob. lat. 50	Lat.	gothic	small	paper		none	
1439-1440	BN, f. lat. 6244 A	Lat.	bâtarde	small	paper	high	marvels; east	Zacheti Finaris Civis Tolonensis (Toulon), Servant of Eugenius IV
15 late	Toledo 49.20	Lat.	<i>merc.</i>	small	paper	none	none	
15 mid	BAV, Barb. lat. 2687	Lat.	minusc.- cursive infl.	med+	parch (palimpsest)	low	travel and misc.	
15 early	BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641	Lat.	cursive min. - documentary infl.	small	paper	low	none	
15 end	BAV, Vat. lat. 5260	Lat.	BH -hum. infl.	small	paper	none	none	
15 mid	BAV, Pal. lat. 1359	Lat.	semi-cursive - gothic	small	paper	low	none	
15	BAV, Vat. lat. 3153	Lat.	minusc. - hum.; minusc. -gothic	small+	parch	high	none	Poss: Thomas de Cipro 1420
15 end	BAV, Vat. lat. 5260	Lat.	BH- hum. infl.	small	paper	none	none	
1458	BAV, Vat. lat. 7317	Lat.	gothic (LQ)	med	paper	low	travel/ east/ marvels	unknown cardinal
1465	Marciana, lat.X.73	Lat.	cursive minusc.	med	paper	med	originally with humanist texts	left by Giovanni Marcanova to Aug. Canons. Padua 1467

Appendix 3, Table 1: Marco Polo's *Book*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript Code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (to c. 1500)
Italian States c. 1400-1500-Latin continued								
15 late	Marciana, lat.X.128	Lat.	cursive- hum. infl.	small+	paper	high	no	
1401	Correr, Cicogna 2408	Lat.	<i>merc.</i>	med+	paper	low	misc.; inc travel	scribe: Filippo di ser Pietro Muleti di Fagagna of Pordenone
The Francophone continent c. 1300-1400 –French								
14 mid	BN, f. fr. 5631	Fr.	gothic	med+	parch	med	none	Duc de Berry (1340-1416); heirs; Louis de Bruges (c. 1425-1492)
14 2/2	BL, Royal 19.D.I	Fr.	gothic	large	parch	very high	travel; marvels; misc.	
14 mid	Stockholm, M. 304	Fr.	gothic	small+	parch	med	geography and map	Charles V (1364-1380) Symon du Solier, official of Honnefleure
14 end	BAV, Ottob. lat. 2207	Fr.	hybrid -documentary infl.	med+	parch	none	none	Loys de Luxembourg, ?Comte de Saint-Pol & Constable of France
The Francophone continent c. 1300-1400 –Latin								
14 late	BL, Add., 19513	Lat.	gothic	med-	parch	med	travel; topography	
14 2/2	Hunter 458	Lat.	gothic	small	parch	very high	travel; topography	
14	BN, f. lat. 17800	Lat.	mixed semi-cursive	med	parch	med	none	
14 late	BN, n.a. lat. 1768	Lat.	cursive (LQ)	small	parch	med	none	OP., Paris (1529)
The Francophone continent c. 1400-1500 –French								
1404-1413	BN, f. fr. 2810	Fr.	gothic	large	parch	very high	travel; topography	Jean sans Peur, then Jean Duc de Berry
15 2/4	Brussels 9309-10	Fr.	bâtarde	med+	parch	very high	marvels; east	Royal (Philip the Good 1419-67)
15 mid	Bern 125	Fr.	batarde (HQ)	large-	parch	high	travel; topography	Pons de St. Maurice family of Périgord
15-16	Geneva 154	Fr.	bâtarde	med	paper	low	none	Early 16 : Francoys Loys de Bourbon
15 late	BL, Egerton 2176	Fr.	bâtarde	small+	parch	high	none	
15 in	Morgan, M.723	Fr.	gothic	med+	parch	very high	east/ history	
1452-1461	BN, f. fr. 5649	Fr.	bâtarde	med	parch	high	none	Charles of Orléans (1394-1466); heirs

Appendix 3, Table 1: Marco Polo's *Book*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript Code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (to c. 1500)
The Francophone continent c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
15 3/4	Stockholm M. 305	Fr.	bâtarde	med	parch	high	none	(?) Jehan Gilbert, Lord of royal 'chambre des comptes', Paris
15 late	Antwerp M 16.14	Lat.	gothic	med	parch		historical verses	Nicholao le Bunqueteur
15 late	Allen MS	Lat.	hybrid	med+	paper	low; NC	travel; topography	
15-16	Ghent 13	Lat.	bâtarde (HQ)	large	parch	high	comp.; geog.	
15 mid	BN, f. lat. 1616	Lat.	bâtarde	med+	paper	low	misc inc. humanist and eastern	Nicolaus Dex, treasurer of Metz and Doctor of Laws (1452)
15 mid	Weissenburg 41	Lat.	bâtarde	med	paper	low	travel; topography, east & comp. NR	
15 end	El Escorial Q.II.13	Lat.	bâtarde	med	paper	low-med	none	
England c. 1300-1400 –Latin								
14 2/4	BL, Royal 14.C.XIII	Lat.	anglicana	large	parch	med-low	mixed; inc. Odorico	Norwich Cathedral Priory
14 mid	BL, Arundel 13	Lat.	anglicana (cursive)	med	parch	low	Odorico	
14 late	Camb., G&C 162/83	Lat.	anglicana (doc. infl.)	small+	parch	low	Odorico; topography (and comp. NR)	
14 mid	CUL, Dd. 8.7	Lat.	gothic	large	parch	med	history	Possibly Thomas Rotherham (1423-1500)
14 end	CUL, Dd. 1.17	Lat.	gothic	large	parch	med	mixed Latin and vernacular	
14	Lambeth 12	Lat.	gothic	large	parch	high	John of Tynemouth (history)	Durham Cathedral Priory
14 late	BL, Harley 5115	Lat.	gothic	large-	parch	med	travel; misc.	15c: Roberto Grey de Kyngston Mawerward
14 1/4	Oxford, Merton 312	Lat.	formal anglicana	med	parch	low	eastern history and NR comp	Clerk of Bishop Thomas Bradwardine (1295-1349)
14 fin	Princeton, Garrett 157	Lat.	anglicana	med	parch	med	none	

Appendix 3, Table 1: Marco Polo's *Book*: Codicological summary

England c. 1400-1500 –French								
Date	Manuscript Code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (to c. 1500)
15 in	Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264	Fr.	gothic	large	parch	very high	marvels; Alexander (matched comp.)	Richard de Wideville, Lord Rivers (1466)
England c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
15 mid	Leiden F. 75	Lat.	cursive- sec. infl.	med	paper	low	comp. NR	
c. 1420	Camb., CCC 5	Lat.	anglicana (HQ)	Large	parch	high	John of Tynemouth	St. Albans' Abbey (Benedictine)
15 mid	TCD, 632	Lat.	secretary	small	paper		misc.	
15 in	Glasgow, Hunter 84	Lat.	anglicana (doc. infl.)	med	parch	high	Alexander; Odorico	John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells and Chancellor of England (15c ½)

Appendix 3, Table 2: Odorico's *Relatio*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (pre-c. 1500)
Italian States c. 1300-1400 –volgare								
14	BNC, II.II.15	<i>volg.</i> (Tus.)	<i>merc.</i>	med+	paper	low	misc. inc. cosmography;	
14 mid-late	BNC, Conv.s.C.7.1170	<i>volg.</i>	gothic	med	parch	med	travel; ethnography	see above (Marco Polo)
14 3/4	BAV, Urb. lat. 1013	<i>volg.</i> (Ven.)	<i>canc.</i>	med	paper	mid-high	varied misc.	
14	Marciana, It. VI.102	<i>volg.</i> (Tus.)	<i>canc.</i>	small	paper		none	15: Matteo di Stefano Lanaiuolo of Gonfalone del Vaio, Florence
Italian States c. 1300-1400 –Latin								
14	Assisi 343	Lat.		large	parch		miracles of Odorico	In Udine convent of OFM (1474)
14	BN, f. lat. 2584	Lat.	gothic	large	parch	med	religious misc; inc. sermons	
14-15	Casanatense 276	Lat.	gothic	small	parch	none	none	
14-15	Marciana, lat. XIV.43	Lat.		med	paper		misc	
Italian States c. 1400-1500 –volgare								
15 fin	BNC, Panc. 92	<i>volg.</i>	<i>merc.</i> (LQ)	med	paper	med	misc; inc. Florentine history	Antonii Bonsignor
15 late	Riccardiana 683	<i>volg.</i> (Tus.)	<i>canc.</i>	small	paper	low	misc. inc travel/ legends	
15 mid	Lucca 1296	<i>volg.</i> (Ven.)	cursive	small	paper	high	travel	
15 2/4	Angelica 2212	<i>volg.</i> (Ven.)	<i>merc.</i> (LQ)	small	paper	low	misc. inc. travel	Francesco de Mariotto de Benimcasa
15	Casanatense 1548	<i>volg.</i> (?Ven.)	<i>canc.</i> (LQ)	small	paper	low	classical	
15 late	BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.a	<i>volg.</i>	<i>merc.</i>	small	paper	med-	travel	
After 1480	BAV, Barb. lat. 4047	<i>volg.</i> (Tus.)	<i>merc.</i>	med	paper	none	varied misc., inc. travel	Andrea di Lorenzo di Cieffo di Masino Ceffi, popolo of San Simone, Florence
15 end	BAV, Barb. lat. 4048	<i>volg.</i> (Tus.)	cursive-hum.	med	paper	high	geography	unknown female religious order
15 end	Correr, It. 2113	<i>volg.</i>	cursive	med	paper	low	varied misc.	

Appendix 3, Table 2: Odorico's *Relatio*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (pre-c. 1500)
Italian States c. 1400-1500 –volgare cont.								
c. 1415	Marciana, It.VI.585	volg.(?Pisa/ Lucca)	canc.	small	paper		discussion of prophecy	
1444	Marciana, It.XI.32	volg.(Ven/ Friuli)	cursive	med+	paper	low	travel, legend, humour	
15 end	Mantua 488	volg.	cursive – hum. infl.	med	paper	low-med	travel and topography	
Italian States c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
1401	Correr, Cicogna 2408	Lat.	merc.	med+	paper	low	misc; inc travel	see above (Polo)
15 end	BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.b	Lat.	merc. hum. infl	small	paper	med-	travel	
15	Naples, VIII.D.68	Lat.						
15	Udine, Misc. 22.3	Lat.	canc.	small	paper	none	comp. -NR	
15	BNC, II.IV.277	Lat.	canc.	med+	paper	low	varied misc.	
1431	BNC, Magl. VII.1334	Lat.	gothic min – hum. infl.	small	paper	low	Dante; verses on the <i>Divina Commedia</i>	'Zanobi', 1483
The Francophone continent c. 1300-1400 –French								
14	Bern, BB, Cod. 125	Fr.	bâtarde	large -	parch	high	travel; east	Pons de St. Maurice family of Périgord
14 late	BL, Royal 19.D.I	Fr.	gothic	large	parch	very high	misc; inc. Marco Polo and marvels	
1368	Besançon 667.G	Fr.	secretary (HQ)	large	parch	high	travel; east	Premonstratensian
14	BN, 3085 Rothschild	Fr.	gothic	med	parch	very high	<i>Otia imperialia</i>	Charles V of France
The Francophone continent c. 1300-1400 –Latin								
14 late	Hunter 458	Lat.	gothic	small	parch	high	travel inc. Marco Polo	
14-15c	BN, f. lat. 3195	Lat.	hybrid (LQ)	med	parch	low	composite travel & east; inc. Marco Polo	
The Francophone continent c. 1400-1500 –French								
15 in.	BN f.fr. 2810	Fr.	gothic	large	parch	very high	travel; inc. Marco Polo	see above (Marco Polo)
15	BN, f. fr. 1380	Fr.	batârde	med	parch (HQ)	high; NC	travel; east	
15	BN, f. fr. 12202	Fr.	batârde (LQ)	med	paper	high; NC	travel; east	'a madame'
15	Brussels 1160-1163	Fr.	cursive	small	parchment	low	<i>Mandeville</i>	
The Francophone continent c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
15	Saint-Omer 737	Lat.	gothic - mixed	large	paper	low	none	St Bertin- Benedictine

Appendix 3, Table 2: Odorico's *Relatio*: Codicological summary

Date	Manuscript code	Lang	Script	Size	Support	Decoration	MS Context	Owners (pre-c. 1500)
The Francophone continent c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
15 mid	Weissenburg 41	Lat.	bâtarde	med	paper	low	travel; topography, east & comp. NR	
England c. 1300-1400 –Latin								
14 mid	BL, Arundel 13	Lat.	anglicana – cursive	med	parch	low	travel; topography	
14 2/4	Camb., CCC 407	Lat.	anglicana	small	parch	med	travel, inc. Marco Polo; geography	Norwich Cathedral Priory
14 end	Camb., G&C 162/83	Lat.	anglicana	small	Parch -LQ	med	travel, inc. Polo	
14	Bodl. Lib, Digby 11	Lat.	semi-cursive - mixed	small	parch	none	misc. inc. theology and eastern travel	?Oxford Franciscans
14-15	Bodl. Lib, Digby 166	Lat.	anglicana	med-	parch	none	misc.	
14 2/4	BL, Royal 14.C.XIII	Lat.	anglicana (HQ)	large	parch (MQ)	med	misc. incl. Marco Polo; geography	see above (Marco Polo)
England c. 1400-1500 –Latin								
pre-1439	Camb., CCC 275	Lat.	anglicana	med	paper	high	misc; scholarly	Thomas Markaunt
15 early	Hunter 84	Lat.	anglicana –doc. infl.	med	Parch (FQ)	high	Alexander, Marco Polo	See above (Marco Polo)
15 1/4	BL, Harley 562	Lat.	cursive - mixed	med-	Parch (FQ)	low	Rome; topography	

3.2. Notes to Tables 3-8

3.2.1 The sample of manuscripts examined

In the case of the majority categories of manuscript, as defined by date, language and region, I have been able to view over half the surviving relevant manuscripts (i.e., non-fragmentary). My sample may therefore be said to be by and large representative, but only insofar as the number and proportions of surviving manuscripts are representative of medieval manuscripts, which is an unknowable quantity (see 3.1). The exceptionally unrepresentative samples, inevitable due to the current geographical dispersal of relevant manuscripts, are clear from the summary below. These are: vernacular manuscripts of Marco Polo from fifteenth-century Italy; Latin manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book* from fourteenth-century Italy; Latin manuscripts of Marco Polo's *Book* and Latin manuscripts of Odorico's *Relatio* from the Francophone continent.

Table 1: Representativeness of MSS of Marco's *Book* examined

<i>Marco Polo</i>	<i>Rel.</i>	<i>Viewed</i>	<i>Rel. Lat</i>	<i>Rel Lat viewed</i>	<i>Rel vern</i>	<i>Rel vern viewed</i>	<i>Total</i>
Italy 14	15	10	7	2	8	8	
Italy 15	30	14	14	7	16	6	
France 14	8	8	4	4	4	4	
France 15	14	5	6	1	8	4	
England 14	9	8	9	8	-	-	
England 15	5	3	4	2	1	1	
				Total rel.: 81		Total viewed: 48	

Table 2: Representativeness of MSS of Odorico's *Relatio* examined

<i>Odorico</i>	<i>Rel.</i>	<i>Viewed</i>	<i>Rel. Lat.</i>	<i>Rel lat viewed</i>	<i>Rel vern.</i>	<i>Rel vern viewed</i>	
Italy 14	8	5	4	2	4	3	
Italy 15	18	10	6	3	12	7	
France 14	6	4	4	2	2	2	
France 15	5	3	2	0	4	3	
England 14	6	6	6	6	-	-	
England 15	3	3	3	3	-	-	
				Total rel.: 47		Total viewed: 31	

In the tables 3-6, I summarise certain aspects of the presentation of the travel accounts in manuscripts, as well presenting a thematic analysis of marginal paratext

and readers' marginalia. The following notes offer a brief explanation of relevant terminology.

3.2.2 Paratext and annotation

Gerard Genette uses the term 'paratext' to refer to 'verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations' that 'surround' and 'extend' a text, 'present' it and ensure its "reception" and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book'.¹ In this thesis, the term is used with specific reference to aspects of manuscripts such as prefaces, tables of contents, indexes, chapter headers (items of paratext that Genette terms 'intertitles'),² running headers at the tops of pages and marginal notes added as part of the production process. When discussing the creators of these paratexts, often unknown individuals in the multi-agent process of scribal production, I employ the term 'paratext-author'.

3.2.2.1 Chapter headers

For the purposes of this thesis what is significant is not the fact of division into chapters nor the fact of rubrication using red ink, but the existence of chapter headers, whether in red or black, that in some way direct the responses of readers to the text contained within each chapter division. 'Chapter headers' is thus employed to refer to a set of intertitles, irrespective of whether these employ red or black ink or whether they are numbered.

3.2.2.2 Marginalia

I note the existence of marginal writing or other forms of marking up of the texts discussed, distinguishing where possible between paratext added as part of the production process of a manuscript and readers' notes. In most cases it is possible to distinguish marginal paratext from readers' annotation on the basis of identification between annotating hands and those of the manuscript's main text, rubricator or corrector.³ In her foundational work *Marginalia*, Helen Jackson defines marginalia as all varieties of intentional traces of reading present in any given manuscript:

¹ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 1.

² Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 294.

³ The texts of owner-copyists form a special case in which the scribe and user of a manuscript are one and the same. In these instances annotation is classed as readerly, with the manuscript's owner-copied status identified in footnote and/or discussion.

readers' written marginal annotation, readers' finding symbols (including but not limited to pattes-de-mouche, manicules, bracketing, crosses), unrelated marginal notes (such as monograms and pentrials).⁴ In addition to intentional marginalia, Jackson also notes the existence of a subset of unintentional traces of reading: squiggles, ink stains and other signs of wear. For the purposes of this thesis I have, as do Jackson and Daniels, worked with only a subset of this material.⁵ I tabulate only those marginal marks that are intentional, relevant to the work that they annotate, and according to palaeographical evidence, can be attributed approximately to the time-bracket of 1300 to 1500. Marginalia tabulated is further divided into 'notes' and 'symbols'. In the former category I include any written annotation, even if the written word is merely an abbreviation of 'nota'. In the category of symbols (designated with a '*' in the tables, as distinguished from 'V', or verbal note) I include non-verbal symbols including manicules, underlining (where clearly linked to roughly datable text) and marginal illustrations.

Programmes of marginalia that consist exclusively of non-verbal symbols present a particular interpretative problem. These may derive from before 1500 in many cases, but, in others, they may not. I have consequently decided to tabulate and acknowledge these (using '*') but not to discuss them in detail because they cannot be dated even approximately. As evidence for manipulation, comprehension or assimilation of the geographical and ethnographic information in the texts, moreover, they are capable of only the most basic interpretation: that of attention paid to a particular element of the text. Programmes of marginalia that consist of linked symbols and text in the same hand and ink are, where they can be dated with reasonable security to before 1500, tabulated, and discussed as integral schemes.

The majority of marginal annotations are positioned in the left and right margins of any given page, with fewer, including running headers, appearing in the top margin, and some in the foot. Annotation that appears elsewhere on a given page: for example, in the blank space at the end of a text, or as an interlinear gloss, is

⁴ However, within the category of marginalia, Jackson distinguishes notes, upon which she focuses, from underlining, vertical marginal lines, asterisks and fists: H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 28.

⁵ Daniels limits the definition of marginalia to 'notes that are related to the text and express a reaction to it': 'Reading and meaning', p. 131.

classed as annotation in the tables and discussion, but with its location identified in a footnote.

Marginal Paratext

I employ the term marginal paratext to designate forms of scribal activity in the margins of a manuscript that form part of the process of production. This includes running headers, marginal aids to distinguish between chapters, glosses and other marginal reading aids. Strictly, it also includes such items as chapter lists, original foliation, and corrections, though I have taken the decision not to tabulate such details here.

Readers Annotations

I have tabulated as readers' marginalia marginal notes added to a manuscript that appear to have been added not as part of the manuscript's production process. Due to the time-limits of this thesis, however, I have not included in the tables marginalia that is datable, either with certainty (i.e., it is dated) or on palaeographical grounds, later than 1500.

Appendix 3, Table 5: Marco Polo's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Latin											
<i>Manuscript with readers' annotations</i>											
BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170	Y	Y		Y	13						
BN, f. lat. 3195	Y ¹	Y	Y	Y	R:67+; ² *1; S:0		Y			2	
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – vernaculars											
Ashburnham 534	Y	Y (1)									
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BN, f. fr. 1116 ³	Y	Y	Y		V0; *6						
BNC, II.IV.136			Y		V28; *1	Y		Y	Y		Y
BNC, II.II.61	Y	Y		1 ⁴							
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations</i>											
BNC, II.IV.88	Y	Y		Y ⁵	*18						
BNC, Pal. 590				Y	3						
BN, f. ital. 434	Y	Y		Y							
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotations</i>											
Ashburnham 525	Y	Y	Y (few)		YS:*1; R:0	Y (1)		Y (1)			
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Latin											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
Riccardiana, 983	Y	Y									
BAV, Vat. lat. 3153	Y	Y									

¹ Chapter headers incomplete.

² Due to damage to certain folios, the number given here is a minimum. The annotation is probably of the fifteenth century.

³ In this column, all notes are verbal unless otherwise specified. In cases where a manuscript contains both verbal notes and symbols, an asterisk followed by a number signifies the number notes in the form of symbols and a 'V' followed by a number signifies written notes.

⁴ The owner-copyist of this manuscript adds a note concerning his own reaction to the *Book* as its end, which ought to be mentioned here even though not strictly marginal.

⁵ Undatable marginal symbols.

Key: A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes to the 'Book of India'; F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes- geographical; H: regional divisions; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 5: Marco Polo's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia continued</i>											
BAV, Vat. lat. 5260	Y	Y									
BAV, Vat. lat. 7317	Y ⁶	Y									
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BAV, Pal. lat. 1359	Y ⁷	Y	Y		*4						
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
BAV, Barb. lat. 2687	Y	Y	Y		S:0; YR:*9; V3		1	Y			
BN, f. lat. 6244 A	Y	Y		Y	6		1	1			
BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641	Y	Y		Y	87		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – vernaculars											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
Ashburnham 770											
BNC, Magl. XIII.73	Y										
BL, Sloane 251											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
Riccardiana, 1924			Y		V43; *1 ⁸	Y		Y			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
BAV, Chigi lat. M.VI 140	Y	Y		Y	0						
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
Hunter 458	Y	Y									

⁶ Chapter headers added later.

⁷ The chapter headers in this manuscript are not completed throughout the volume.

⁸ Including rubricated page headers and marginal paratext.

Key: A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes to the 'Book of India'; F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes- geographical; H: regional divisions; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 5: Marco Polo's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
BL, Add. 19513	Y	Y		Y ⁹ *29; V13			Y (4)				Y (2)
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' marginalia</i>											
BN, f. lat. 17800	Y	Y	Y	Y	R:2						
BN, n.a. lat. 1768	Y	Y	Y	Y	0; 0						
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – French manuscripts											
BL, Royal 19.D.I	Y	Y									
BN, f. fr. 5631	Y	Y									
BAV, Ottob. lat. 2207											
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
Stockholm M. 304	Y	Y		Y	15		Y	Y	Y	1	
The Francophone Continent: c. 1400-1500 – Latin											
BN, f. lat. 1616	Y	Y	Y		0						
The Francophone Continent: c. 1400-1500 – French											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
BN, f. fr. 2810	Y	Y									
BN, f. fr. 5649	Y	Y									
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BL, Egerton 2176	Y	Y	Y		0						
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
Stockholm M. 305	Y	Y		Y	0						

⁹ Multiple hands.

Key: A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes to the 'Book of India'; F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes- geographical; H: regional divisions; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 5: Marco Polo's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

MS number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
England: c. 1300-1400 – Latin											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
BL, Harley 5115	Y	Y									
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
Camb., G&C 162/83	Y	Y	Y		*4;V9						
CUL, Dd. 1.17	Y	Y	Y		0						
CUL, Dd. 8.7	Y		Y		1						
BL, Royal 14.C.XIII	Y	Y	Y		39						
Merton 312	Y	Y	Y		*1						
Lambeth 12	Y		Y		5						
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>											
BL, Arundel 13 ¹⁰	Y	Y		Y	E: 24 L: 95+		E: Y		L: Y		E: Y; L: Y
England: c. 1400-1500 – Latin											
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>											
Hunter 84	Y	Y	N ¹¹								
Camb., CCC 5	Y		N ¹²								
England: c. 1400-1500 – French											
Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264	Y	Y									

¹⁰ E= Early hand (fourteenth century); L= Later hand (fifteenth century).

¹¹ Book numbers only appear in the margins.

¹² Book numbers only.

Key: A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes to the 'Book of India'; F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes- geographical; H: regional divisions; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 6, Odorico da Pordeone's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
Casatense, 276	Y	Y									
<i>Manuscripts with scribal paratext</i>											
BN, f. lat. 2584	Y		Y		19	Y		Y	Y	Y	
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Vernacular manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
BNC, II.II.15											
BNC, Magl. VII.1334											
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations</i>											
BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170	Y	Y		Y ¹	*13	Y (1)					
BAV, Urb. lat. 1013	Y	Y		?Y ²	?*6						
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BNC, II.IV.277			Y		*33; V2						
BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.b			Y		*9; V17	Y		Y (1)	Y	Y	
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Vernacular manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
Riccardiana, 683											
Casatense, 1548											
BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.a											

¹ Marginal manicules. Occasionally together with text in gothic minuscule elsewhere in volume.

² Marginal crosses only: undatable.

A: chapter headers; **B:** chorographic chapter headers; **C:** scribal marginal paratext; **D:** readers' annotation; **E:** total notes ('Indies'); **F:** marginal paratext –geographical; **G:** readers' notes –geographical; **H:** regional divisions and spatial geography; **I:** Christian topography; **J:** toponyms; **K:** pole star

Appendix 3, Table 6, Odorico da Pordeone's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
BNC, Panc. 92	Y										
BAV, Barb. lat. 4047											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BAV, Barb. lat. 4048			Y		2	Y(1)				Y(1)	
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>											
Angelica, 2212				Y	*3 ³						
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
BN, f. lat. 3195	Y	Y	Y		33	Y(1)			Y		
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotations</i>											
Hunter 458	Y	Y	Y		S:*5; V0 YR:*6;V22						
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – Vernacular manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
BL, Royal 19.D.I	Y (few)	Y (few)									
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>											
BN, 3085 Rothschild	Y			1	0						
The Francophone Continent, c. 1400-1500 – Vernacular manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
BN, f. fr. 2810	Y	Y									
BN, f. fr. 12202	Y	Y									

³ Undatable lines alongside certain text sections (e.g. fol. 42r).

A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes ('Indies'); F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes –geographical; H: regional divisions and spatial geography; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 6, Odorico da Pordeone's Indies: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations</i>											
BN, f. fr. 1380	Y	Y		Y	6		Y(1)		Y		
England: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
Camb., CCC 407	Y		Y		*11;V:22	Y					
BL, Royal 14.C.XIII	Y	Y	Y		*1						
Bodl. Lib, Digby 11			Y		44	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Bodl. Lib, Digby 166			Y		45	Y		Y	Y	Y	
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations (England, c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts continued)</i>											
BL, Arundel 13				Y	97		Y		Y	2	
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotations</i>											
Camb., G&C 162/83			Y	Y	S: *8;V3 R: V3		Y	Y		Y	
England: c. 1400-1500 – Latin manuscripts											
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>											
BL, Harley 562											
Hunter 84											
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>											
Camb., CCC 275	Y		Y		3						

A: chapter headers; B: chorographic chapter headers; C: scribal marginal paratext; D: readers' annotation; E: total notes ('Indies'); F: marginal paratext –geographical; G: readers' notes –geographical; H: regional divisions and spatial geography; I: Christian topography; J: toponyms; K: pole star

Appendix 3, Table 7: Marco's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Latin																			
<i>Manuscript with readers' annotations</i>																			
BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170		Y	6	5	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y							Y		
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – vernaculars																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
Ashburnham 534																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext¹</i>																			
BN, f. fr. 1116	Y		1	0															
BNC, II.IV.136	Y		8	0	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y					Y	?Y ²	Y	Y
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations</i>																			
BNC, II.IV.88		Y ³	9	9	Y				Y	Y						Y			
BNC, Pal. 590		Y	1	1												Y			
BN, f. ital. 434		Y																	
BNC, II.II.61		1																	Y
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotations</i>																			
Ashburnham 525	Y	Y																	
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Latin																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
Riccardiana, 983																			
BAV, Vat. lat. 3153																			
BAV, Vat. lat. 5260																			
BAV, Vat. lat. 7317																			

For the numbers of notes, see Table 5, Col. E.

¹ For the total number of notes in the relevant section see Table 5, col. 5.

² Reference to the 'sancta vita' of the Buddha, fol. 53r.

³ Undatable marginal symbols.

Key: **A:** marginal paratext; **B:** readers' notes; **C:** ethnographic notes (total in 'Book of India'); **D:** ethnographic notes- symbols; **E:** cannibalism; **F:** tailed men; **G:** wild men; **H:** cenoccephali; **I:** physical characteristics; **J:** nudity; **K:** Brahmans; **L:** *satī*; **M:** self-sacrifice; **N:** other funeral practices; **O:** sexual behaviours; **P:** miscellaneous idolatrous practices; **Q:** positive moral judgement; **R:** negative moral judgement; **S:** other analysis.

Appendix 3, Table 7: Marco's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																			
BAV, Pal. lat. 1359	Y		2	2		Y										Y			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>																			
BAV, Barb. lat. 2687 ⁴	Y	Y	7	6	R							R	R		R	R			
BN, f. lat. 6244 A		Y	4	4										Y		Y			
BAV, Ottob. lat. 1641		Y	21	3	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y			2
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – vernaculars																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
Ashburnham 770																			
BNC, Magl. XIII.73																			
BL, Sloane 251																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																			
Riccardiana 1924	Y		19	0	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>																			
BAV, Chigi lat.																			
M.VI.140																			
Y																			
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
Hunter 458																			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>																			
BL, Add. 19513		Y	8	2	Y		Y		Y							Y			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' marginalia</i>																			
BN, f. lat. 3195 ⁵	Y	Y	26	1	R	R	R		R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	R
BN, f. lat. 17800	Y	Y	1	1											Y				
BN, n.a. lat. 1768	Y	Y	0																

⁴ 'R' indicates readers' notes: the scribal notes in this manuscript peter out in Book 3.

⁵ 'R' stands for readers' notes, as both readers' and scribal notes feature in this manuscript.

Key: A: marginal paratext; B: readers' notes; C: ethnographic notes (total in 'Book of India'); D: ethnographic notes- symbols; E: cannibalism; F: tailed men; G: wild men; H: cenoccephali; I: physical characteristics; J: nudity; K: Brahmans; L: *satī*; M: self-sacrifice; N: other funeral practices; O: sexual behaviours; P: miscellaneous idolatrous practices; Q: positive moral judgement; R: negative moral judgement; S: other analysis.

Appendix 3, Table 7: Marco's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
The Francophone Continent: c. 1300-1400 – French manuscripts																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
BL, Royal 19.D.I																			
BN, f. fr. 5631																			
BAV, Ottob. lat. 2207																			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>																			
Stockholm M. 304		Y	3					Y							Y				
The Francophone Continent: c.1400-1500 – Latin																			
BN, f. lat. 1616	Y		0																
The Francophone Continent: c. 1400-1500 – French																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
Paris, BN f.f. 2810																			
BN, f. fr. 5649																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext or readers' marginalia</i>																			
BL, Egerton 2176	Y		0																
Stockholm M. 305		Y	0																
England: c. 1300-1400 – Latin																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginalia</i>																			
BL, Harley 5115																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																			
Camb., G&C 162/83	Y		7	1		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y				
CUL, Dd. 1.17	Y		0																
CUL, Dd. 8.7	Y		0																
BL., Royal 14.C.XIII	Y		20	2	Y				Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
Oxford, Merton 312	Y		1																
Lambeth12	Y		3		Y							Y			Y				

Key: A: marginal paratext; B: readers' notes; C: ethnographic notes (total in 'Book of India'); D: ethnographic notes- symbols; E: cannibalism; F: tailed men; G: wild men; H: cenoccephali; I: physical characteristics; J: nudity; K: Brahmans; L: *satī*; M: self-sacrifice; N: other funeral practices; O: sexual behaviours; P: miscellaneous idolatrous practices; Q: positive moral judgement; R: negative moral judgement; S: other analysis.

Appendix 3, Table 7: Marco's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
<i>Manuscripts with readers' marginalia</i>																			
BL, Arundel 13 ⁶	Y	E: 9; L: 42	N/A	Y; Y	N	N; Y	Y: N	N; Y	Y: Y	N; Y	N; Y	N; Y	N; Y	N; Y	Y; Y	?; Y	N; N	Y; Y	N; Y
England: c. 1400-1500 – Latin																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' marginalia</i>																			
Glasgow, Hunter 84																			
Camb., CCC 5 ⁷																			
England: c. 1400-1500 – French																			
Bodl. Lib, Bodl. 264																			

⁶ 'E' represents the earlier marginal hand and 'L' the later.

⁷ A scribal hand adds Book numbers only in this manuscript.

Key: A: marginal paratext; B: readers' notes; C: ethnographic notes (total in 'Book of India'); D: ethnographic notes- symbols; E: cannibalism; F: tailed men; G: wild men; H: cenoccephali; I: physical characteristics; J: nudity; K: Brahmans; L: *satī*; M: self-sacrifice; N: other funeral practices; O: sexual behaviours; P: miscellaneous idolatrous practices; Q: positive moral judgement; R: negative moral judgement; S: other analysis.

Appendix 3, Table 8: Odorico's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>																		
Casanatense, 276																		
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																		
BN, f. lat. 2584	Y		5	0	Y		Y		Y									Y
The Italian States: c. 1300-1400 – Vernacular manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>																		
BNC, II.II.15																		
BNC, Magl. VII. 1334																		
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotations</i>																		
BNC, Conv. Soppr.																		
C.7.1170		Y	?1/2 ¹	?1/2	?Y						Y							
BAV, Urb. lat. 1013		Y ²	2	2														Y
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Latin manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																		
BNC, II.IV.277	Y ³		5	4							Y	Y						Y
BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.b	Y		3	3										Y				Y

For total numbers of notes, see Table 6, Col. E.

¹ It is sometimes unclear to what precisely the manicules in this MS are pointing.

² Tiny undatable crosses.

³ In-text rubrics, parsing with paragraph marks, and programme of marginal direction using paragraph marks (¶) and occasional notes all are done in the same hand and ink.

Key: A: marginal paratext ; B: readers' annotation; C: ethnographic notes (Indies); D: ethnographic notes (symbols); E: anthropophagy; F- wild men; G: cenoccephali; H: physical characteristics; I: nudity; J- Brahmans; K: sati; L: self-sacrifice; M: other funeral practices; N: sexual morality; O: idolatrous practices; P: positive moral judgements; Q: negative moral judgements; R: other judgement/ analysis

Appendix 3, Table 8: Odorico's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
The Italian States: c. 1400-1500 – Vernacular manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotation</i>																		
Riccardiana 683																		
Casatense, 1548																		
BAV, Vat. lat. 5256.a																		
BNC, Panc. 92																		
BAV, Barb. lat. 4047																		
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																		
BAV, Barb. lat. 4048	Y																	
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>																		
Angelica, 2212		Y ⁴	2	2	Y											Y		
The Francophone continent: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																		
BN, f. lat. 3195	Y		14	7	Y				Y	Y	Y			Y	Y			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotation</i>																		
Hunter, 458	Y	Y	15	1	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y
The Francophone continent: c. 1300-1400 – Vernacular manuscripts																		
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotation</i>																		
BL, Royal 19.D.I																		
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>																		
BN, 3085 Rothschild		Y																

⁴ Undatable marginal lines.

Key: A: marginal paratext ; B: readers' annotation; C: ethnographic notes (Indies); D: ethnographic notes (symbols); E: anthropophagy; F- wild men; G: cenocephali; H: physical characteristics; I: nudity; J- Brahmans; K: *satī*; L: self-sacrifice; M: other funeral practices; N: sexual morality; O: idolatrous practices; P: positive moral judgements; Q: negative moral judgements; R: other judgement/ analysis

Appendix 3, Table 8: Odorico's Indian ethnography: presentation and traces of reading

Ms number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	
The Francophone continent: c. 1400-1500 – Vernacular manuscripts																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotation</i>																			
BN, f. fr. 2810																			
BN, f. fr. 12202																			
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>																			
BN, f. fr. 1380		Y	1															Y	
England: c. 1300-1400 – Latin manuscripts																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																			
Camb., CCC 407	Y		12	4	Y		Y				Y	Y			Y		Y		
BL, Royal 14.C.XIII	Y		0																
Bodl. Lib, Digby 166	Y		9	0	Y		Y				Y		Y				Y	Y	
Bodl. Lib, Digby 11	Y		13	0	Y		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		
<i>Manuscripts with readers' annotation</i>																			
BL, Arundel 13		Y	35		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	? ⁵	Y	Y
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext and readers' annotation</i>																			
Camb., G&C 162/83	Y	Y	S:5;	S:5	Y							Y		Y			Y		
England: c. 1400-1500 –Latin manuscripts																			
<i>Manuscripts without marginal paratext or readers' annotations</i>																			
BL, Harley 562																			
GUL, Hunter 84																			
<i>Manuscripts with marginal paratext</i>																			
Camb., CCC, 275	Y																		

⁵ For the ambiguous note relating to pilgrimage, see 5.4.2.3.

Key: A: marginal paratext ; B: readers' annotation; C: ethnographic notes (Indies); D: ethnographic notes (symbols); E: anthropophagy; F- wild men; G: cenoccephali; H: physical characteristics; I: nudity; J- Brahmans; K: satī; L: self-sacrifice; M: other funeral practices; N: sexual morality; O: idolatrous practices; P: positive moral judgements; Q: negative moral judgements; R: other judgement/ analysis

Bibliography of works cited

Manuscripts cited in text and tables

I include in this list all manuscripts from which have been used for this thesis (i.e., that appear in the tables of relevant manuscripts in Appendix 3, Tables 1 and 2). The list therefore includes some manuscripts that I have not viewed in person, but concerning which codicological data have been taken from catalogues or handlists, as well as those personally examined. Manuscripts examined in person, microfilm or facsimile appear in **boldface**. Short codes employed in the thesis and tables appear in the right hand column. Where several manuscripts are referred to from the same library or collection, a code for the library or collection is given, to which the relevant manuscript number or name is added in the text and tables.

Antwerp Museum Plantin-Moretus, MS M 16.14	Antwerp M 16.14
Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 343	Assisi 343
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Ham. 424	Berlin, Ham. 424
MS Lat. qu. 618	Berlin, lat. qu. 618
Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 125 ; Cod. 557	Bern
Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 667. G	Besançon 667. G
Bloomington, Lilly Library, Allen MS (n. n.)	Allen MS
Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MSS 1160-1163; MSS 9309-10	Brussels
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 5-6; MS 275; MS 407	Camb., CCC
Gonville and Caius College MS 162/83	Camb., G&C 162/83
University Library, MS Dd. 1.17; MS Dd. 8.7	CUL
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 632	TCD, 632
El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, MS Q.II.13	El Escorial Q.II.13
Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, MS Cl. II. 336	Ferrara Cl. II. 336
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham MS 525; MS 534; MS 770	Ashburnham
Plutei MS 90. Sup. 55 (La)	Plut. 90, S.55
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS II.II.15; MS II.II.61; MS II.IV.277	BNC
MS II.IV.88; MS II.IV.317; MS II.IV.136	
Magliabechiano MS XIII.73; MS XXI.151;	BNC, Magl.
MS VII.1334	
Palatino MS 590	BNC, Pal. 590
Panciatichiano MS 92	BNC, Panc. 92

Conventi soppressi MS C.7.1170

Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 683; MS 983; MS 1036; MS 1924	BNC, Conv. Soppr. C.7.1170 Riccardiana
Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, MS fr. 154	Geneva 154
Ghent, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS 13	Ghent 13
Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS 84 (T.4.1); MS 458 (V.6.8)	Hunter Leiden F. 75
Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. lat. MS F. 75	
London, British Library, Additional MS 15760; MS 19513; MS 25712 Arundel MS 13 Cotton MS Otho D.I; MS Otho D.V Egerton MS 2176 Harley MS 562; MS 5115 Royal MS 14.C.XIII; MS 19.D.I Sloane MS 251	BL, Add. BL, Arundel 13 BL, Cotton Otho BL, Egerton 2176 BL, Harley BL, Royal BL, Sloane 251 Lambeth 10-12 Lucca 1296 Lucerne, Misc 5.4 Mantua 488 Ambrosiana X.12. sup. Estense 131 Naples, Vindob. lat. 50 Naples, VIII.D.68 Morgan, M.723
Lambeth Palace Library, MSS 10-12	
Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, MS 1296	
Lucerne, Zentralbibliothek, KB MS Misc 5.4	
Mantua, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 488 (E.I.10)	
Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS X. 12 sup.	
Modena, Biblioteca Estense, lat. MS 131 (α.s.6.14)	
Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, Vindob. lat. MS 50 MS VIII.D.68	
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 723	
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 264; MS 761 Digby MS 11; MS 166; MS 196 Merton College, MS 312	Bodl. Lib, Bodl. Bodl. Lib, Digby Merton 312 Padua, CM 211
Padua, Biblioteca Comunale, MS CM 211	
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français, MS 934; MS 1116; MSS 1377-1379; MS 1380; MS 2810; MS 5631; MS 5649; MS 12202; fonds italien, MS 434 fonds latin MS 1616; MS 2584; MS 3195; MS 6244 A MS 17800; MS 6561 Nouvelles acquisitions latins MS 1768 Rothschild MS 3085	BN, f. fr. BN, f. ital. 434 BN, f. lat. BN, n.a. lat. 1768 BN, 3085 Rothschild
Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Palatino MS 318	Parma, Pal. 318
Princeton, Princeton University, Garrett MS 157	Princeton, Garrett 157
Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 1548; MS 276 Biblioteca Angelica, MS 2212	Casanatense Angelica, 2212

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