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Pre-Columban discovery and exploration

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

PRE-COLUMBAN DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

Submitted by

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Chapter I

What did Mediaeval man know of the world outside of Europe before Columbus gave impetus to the age of discovery? His limitations were so narrow, there is surely great significance in the events that led him to break through his bonds and seek new lands.

The pilgrim goal of the 12th and 13th centuries was as varied as the type of pilgrim. The Crusader was filled with religious fervor, and boundless enterprise. He laid the foundations of discovery and conquest, trade dominion and colonization in the richest portions of the earth. Two hundred and fifty years before America was discovered there was Asiatic exploration in Burmah, Ceylon, Siam, China, India, Madagascar and Abyssinia. The religious fervor of the Crusader caused St. Frances Xavier and other Franciscans to make a million converts in Japan by the 16th century and took John of Monte Corvino and his Mission successors into India by 1291.

The Norsemen, first as heathen and then as Christian explorers discovered and ravaged or settled new lands far beyond the farthest limits of ancient knowledge, quite apart from the life of Christendom, at first in bitter hostility to it. The gradual association, incorporation or alliance of the Scandinavian nations with the nations they had come to destroy, or to plunder has an overwhelming influence on the Europe of the Middle Ages. The invigorating influence

of these northern invaders affects the commercial and territorial expansion as well as the extension of European influence and spirit.

Commercial travelers sought a varied goal of exchange of European goods for the Asiatic riches of that time. Mediaeval history is filled with references to spices. When Latimer was burned at the stake he left as keepsakes for his friends, single nutmegs. The fine for a Prince was 2,000 lbs. of pepper. Some of the reasons for this demand for spices came from the wretched cooking and preparing of food; other reasons lay in the Church's enforcement of a fish diet made more palatable by spiced drink, Jewels were an inducement to travel. The Church added to man's natural desire for precious gems, the promise of eternal peace for those who decorated Saints' shrines with jewels.

Glass, silk and cotton, came from the East. Mediaeval man was clad in wool. Rugs, and draperies to soften his feudal halls came from the opulent East.

This commercial travel through Syria and Egypt, the Euxine coasts and Asia Minor laid the beginnings of an ever-growing influence in the future. There were Jewish travelers beyond the Euphrates, to Central and Further Asia. These were especially useful as envoys, negotiators, commercial travelers, and spies. There is also record of communication between distant Hebrew communities which were, even

in those days drawn together by their racial isolation.

Numbers of writers, travelers, envoys and statesmen journeyed these paths broken by the early commercial traveler, drawn to Asia by the Conquests of the Mongols, especially by their great attacks on Eastern Europe 1220 - 1222 and 1238 - 1239. There were embassies from the Pope to the Grand Khan of the Mongols in hopes of a peaceful affiliation with these dread strangers. They usually resulted in exhortations to Europe to combine, and to resist "these devils".

These Pilgrims, traders and missionaries of the earlier Middle Age linked Christian Europe with the outside world. In the central mediaeval era, there is a lessening of their hold in Central Asia. In the Far East and south of Asia the Nestorian Missions began to give way to Islam. From the point of view of territory acquired, the expansion is greatest to the north following the work of the Scandinavians.

But the greatest extension of knowledge of peoples and places came from the writings and reports of "the men of Catholic Europe crossing the heart of Asia, and bringing to the Court of China first hand evidence of the lands near the sunseting".¹

1. C. R. Beazley Vol. p. 19

The chief victories of European enterprise and travel in the truly unknown world, were the Norse discoveries. There were three main lines of northern advance. The first, the western, or north-western, running by Caithness, the Orkneys, the Shetlands, and the Faroes reached Iceland, Greenland, Baffin's Bay and the shores of Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia¹ - perhaps Massachusetts.

The second invasion ran along the North German shore and, reaching the Straits of Dover fell upon both sides of the Channel, only varying in "strength as the resistance was stronger or weaker in England or in France". Piratic parties from Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, with their Ostend brothers from Ireland, sailed on to plunder the Bay of Biscay and Northern Spain. Hearing of the rich Moslem rulers and their weakness, the Norsemen tried to force their way up the Tagus and the Douro. From their settlement on the Seine "Norman" explorers came to the South of Italy and to Sicily. These Norsemen from Sicily carried their invasion into Northern Africa, reaching Tunis. Another arm of their conquest reached from Normandy across the channel to England.

The third route has two divisions; one took its route across the Baltic, proceeding north-east to Finland and due east to Novogorod and Russia, the other Skirts the

1. Routes C. R. Beazley Vol. 1 p. 19

coast of Norway to finmark and the North Cape of Europe, to the Nurman coast of Lapland and the country of the Biarman on the White Sea and the Dovina.¹

Following these routes, the Northmen enlarged their horizon "from the White Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar, from the Limerick to Constantinople, first as ocean rovers, and buccaneers, then as rebellious emigrants, and finally as founders of new states".²

The North American explorations of the Norsemen, like many indefinite records, win interest because of their possibilities.

The records available for research, are the copies of sagas. Of the Saga of Eric the Red, there are two copies one 1334, the other 1400.³ There is the Book of Hauk, a descendant of Thorfinn Karlsefne. And there is the Flatey Book, used in the Heimskringle Saga. Then there is the Islandingabok or Icelander's Book, 1134.⁴ In addition to these, there are numerous manuscripts in the Arne-Magnusson library collection. The Codex Frisianus, Frissbok, believed written by an Icelander in Norway about 1300⁵ is the earliest manuscript mentioning Wineland of whose date we have certain knowledge.

The eldest surviving manuscript, 1334, says that Wineland was discovered by the son of Eric Thorvaldsen,

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1. Routes C. R. Beazley Vol. II p.21
 2. C. R. Beazley Vol. II p. 22
 3. Arthur M. Reeves.
 4. Beazley 1325
 5. Note 4, appendix.

called the Red, the first Icelandic explorer and colonist of Greenland. He, Leif, returning from a voyage to Norway not later than 1000, was driven from the direct track to Greenland and came upon a country of which he had no previous knowledge.¹ He reported it upon his return and an ineffectual attempt was made to reach this land again.

A few years later Thorfinn Thorvansson, called Karlsefne, an Icelander renewed the attempt. He sighted land which, because of the flat stones strewn on its surface, he called slabland or Helluland.² (981) Continuing south they found a wooded land they called Markland, from its trees, (they being inhabitants of a treeless land). They followed a shore indented with bays and creeks. Two of them went inland to explore the country. One brought back a bunch of grapes, another an ear of wild (self-sown) grain. They sailed south until they came to a bay with an island at the mouth and strong currents. They remained here a winter, a severe one. They then continued south, halting at a river which flowed first into a lake, and then into the sea. The mouth was shoal except at flood tide. They went up it and remained the second winter. There were woods, wild wheat, and grapes. The country was inhabited by Skraelings. (These were not Esquimaux but some vanished race in the 10th and 11th centuries, far to the

1. Saga of Eric the Red.

Saga of Thorfinn Karlsefne no. 544 A. M. Coll.

2. Hellu, a flat stone.

south, 41 - 49 55.) They bartered with these people. Once the Skraelings were frightened by the bellowings of a bull and they fled in skin canoes. In three weeks they returned and gave battle. Two of Karlsefne's men were kelled. The explorers returned to the place where they spent the first winter and the following spring, they set sail for Greenland. ¹

The Flatey Book Ms. of 1370 and 1390² give two detached narratives. They ascribe the discovery to Biarni Heriulfsson, giving a date several years before Leif Ericsson's voyage.

Biarne set sail to visit his father, Thorvad. A fog set in and a north wind blew him for several days.⁴ When the sun shone, there was a level land covered with wood. They sailed south for two days and two nights and again saw a level land with forests, while in Greenland there were mountains of ice. They did not land but put to sea and with a strong south-west breeze and sailed three days and three nights. Now they saw a high mountainous land. Once more they put out to sea and after three days of the same breeze, landed at Heriulfsness.

The next section of the Flatey book version introduces Leif Ericsson and gives Leif's voyage as a result of

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1. Beazley Vol. 2 p.62 -69
 2. Reeves, Beazley 1380 - 1387
 3. A. D. 984 - 986.
 4. Strum,a doegr - 24 hrs.

Biarne's description.¹ Leif sailed with thirty-five companions and a trusty counselor named Tyrker. When they came to the country Biarne had seen last of all, they went ashore. There were huge snowy mountains, no grass but flat rocks extending from the shore to the mountains. Leif said, "It has not been with us as with Biarne, that we have not gone upon the land; I will give it a name, and the name shall be Helluland".² (Slabland.) Then they put to sea and found another land, where they also went ashore. This was flat, overgrown with wood, and the beaches had broad stretches of white sand. Leif said "We will give it a name according to its kind and call it Markland". (Woodland.) Again they put to sea with the wind from the north-east and again they came to land. Then they sailed into a strait between an island and a cape (ness) that jutted out into the sea on the north. The tide detained them and they rushed ashore to find a place where a river flowed out of a lake. They towed their vessel up the river and into the lake and cast anchor. They built booths for themselves here and set about for the wintering. There was food, salmon etc., and excellent grass for fodder, not withered by the winter. The day and night were more equal.³ When they had finished their house-building, Leif divided them into two groups, to explore the country. "Half shall stay

1. Reeves on Flatey book.

2. Beazley Vol. II p. 51

3. Reeves, Wineland the Good pp. 181 - 185

here, and half shall search the land; but these last shall come back at night and not wander from each other." This they did for some time. One day there was a great discovery. Tyrker did not return at night and when they found him he was very merry. He said in Norse, "Something new have I found - vines and grapes; believe me it is true for I was born (Germany) where there is no lack of vines and grapes."¹ Leif divided his men into groups to gather grapes and to fell wood to load their ship. So they loaded the stern boat with grapes and took samples of the woods, of the self-sown wheat and of the maple wood,² and in the spring they sailed away, and Leif called that country Vinland the good, (from the produce of its grapes). With a fair wind they came to Greenland; thereafter was Leif called the Lucky and got much wealth and fame, and much talk was there of that Vinland journey of his.³

Should authenticity be determined by such fragments of notices from the Sagas? Are they better evidence than so-called runic inscriptions or other archaeological remains such as have been found in Baffinland?⁴ What proof is there? Bancroft says, "The story of colonization of America by Northmen rests on narrative mythological in form, and obscure in meaning, ancient yet not contemporary. The intrepid mariners who colonized Greenland could easily have extended

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1. Dr. Strum doubts this Tyrker story. Thinks it damaging to the Flatey narrative.
 2. Reeves, Wineland the Good p.67
 3. Returning home he rescued fifteen Norsemen, one Thorir and Gudrid his wife. Gudrid later married the explorer Thorfinn Karlsefne.
 4. Beazley Vol. II p. 72.

their voyages to Labrador, and have explored the coasts to the south of it. No clear historic evidence establishes the natural probability that they accomplished the passage and no vestige of their presence on our continent has been found."

Justin Winsor,¹ following the laws of probability, says, "The extremely probable and almost necessary Pre-Columban knowledge of the north-eastern parts of America follows from the venturesome spirit of the mariners of those seas from fish and traffic, and from the easy transitions from coast to coast by which they would have been lured to meet more southerly climes. The chances from such natural causes are quite as strong an argument in favor of the early Northmen venturing, as the somewhat questionable representations of the Sagas."

Reeves thinks the saga reliable when historic facts are separated from the literary, and that the several notices of Wineland, scattered through so many Icelandic writings, while they yield no very great amount of information concerning that country, afford, however, a clear insight into the wide diffusion of the intelligence of the discovery in the earlier saga period. In every instance, they confirm the Wineland story as it is unfolded in the leading narrative of the discover, The Saga of Eric The Red.²

1. Nar. 8 Crit. Hist. of U.S. Vol. II p. 23

2. Reeves p. 18

In other directions the Norsemen fought and roamed, changing the names of the Capes and the coasts that they found, and naming new ones. Islam became Saracen-land, and Galicia - Jacobs land. Negro and Moorish countries were the Lands of the Bluemen. The Hebrides were the South Islands; eastern Russia the Garth-realm, etc. The city of Constantinople was the Great Toron, and the Great Norse market of Novgorod was Holmgarth.

The Straits of Gibraltar are named traditionally from a Norseman, Norva, who first sailed through the channel in the 10th century. Magnus Barefoot's Ssga gives this honor to Skopti Ogmundson at the beginning of the twelfth century. Skopti sailed at harvest with five long ships to Flanders; he was there for the winter; early in the spring he went on to Valland (northern and western France); in the summer he passed through Norva Sound; in harvest time he arrived at Rome. There Skopti died. Men said he was the first Norseman to sail through Norva Sound.¹

The Norsemen were pilgrims, traders, travelers and conquerors in the Mediterranean, not primarily explorers, and they discovered for themselves rather than for Europe though their part in breaking down the Moslem rule in southern Europe was great. Their familiarity with these lands is shown in the geographical references in the Norse mytho-

1. Magnus Barefoot's Saga Ch. XXII

logical sagas - stories part fact and part glorification of Odin and other Gods who settled Sweden and are often linked with the daring exploits of the oldest Norsemen upon the ocean. There is reference to a sea which goes in at Norva Sound way up to the land of Jerusalem; and from that sea a long bay, which is called the Black Sea goes off to the north and divides the two World-Ridings, the east of Europe from the west. To the north of this sea lay Sweden, the great cold land. There is a mountain barrier from north-east to south-west, which parted Great Sweden from the other realms, that is thought to be the Ural Range. The northern part of this Sweden lies unpeopled by reason of the frost and the cold, just as the southern parts of Blue-land are waste because of the sun's burning.

Harold Hardrada was the highest type of Norse pioneer. He journeyed in eastern Europe and round the shores of the Mediterranean. (1035- 1055) He fought in well-nigh every land in Christendom. He entered Byzantine service and fought with wild beasts in the Hippodrome in Constantinople. After his campaigns in the Mediterranean, in Sicily and North Africa, as captain of the Varangian guard, he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There he bathed in the Jordan and made safe the road there.² Wishing to return to Norway he left the service of the Greek King and "leapt" the chain that guarded the entrance to the Posphorus,

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1. Beazley Vol. II p. 24. Negro-Land
 2. Harold Hardrada's Saga ch. VI - XII

sailed over the Euxine and the Sea of Azov, and returned by way of Kiev and Dnieper to Novgorod.

Novgorod was the great objective of the Norse expansion across the Baltic, north-east to Finland, and east to Russia.¹ In 862 Rurik and his men founded the central state of mediaeval Russia. The Russian Slavs of the North, or a Scandinavian colony dominating these Slavs, and living about old Novgorod, about Lake Ladoga and about Iborsk, asked for help against their hostile brethren living in the south about Kiev. In answer to their appeal Rurik and his warriors came and founded the Russian states which in the 10th and 11th centuries plundered the Byzantine Empire and later adopted its faith. There was constant travel of Swedes, Danes and Norsemen to the Russian Principalities of Gardariki. At the close of the 10th century Old Novgorod was the principal center of power and trade and national intercourse of the Russian principalities and their trade along the Baltic. Its traders spread over the north of Russia, to the Murman, or north coast of Lapland, the North Sea, the Doina, and the Petchora; some went as far as the Ural Range. At the end of the 9th century the men of Novgorod had penetrated into the basin of the northern Duina; between 1096 - 1187 the trade dominion of the Novgorod republic claimed to have reached a firm establishment in the Petchora country and in Yugria. In the 13th century it

1. Cf. Nestor's Chronicle Ch. XIII - Xv

was one of the greatest trading posts of the Hanseatic League, equal with Bruges and London. When other Russian peoples were submerged by the Tartars, Novgorod escaped. But it became more and more German and Hanseatic until it ceased to be Russian, becoming a barrier between Russian trade and the Baltic. In 1478 Tsar Ivan IV took it; a century later Ivan VI destroyed it for it had become, in the eyes of Persians, a traitor city, which strangled its brothers and kept them from intercourse with other nations. Novgorod prepared the way for the political ascendancy of Moscow.

The Norse kingdom dates from 860 - 935 when it was organized under Halfdan, the Black, and his son Harold Fair-hair. These chiefs attacked and shook the local independence chasing the rebel vikings to the seas. In the winter these vikings had made their home in the Orkneys and Hebrides; in summer they pillaged Harold's realm. Finally, he set out in pursuit of them. He drove them out of the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the Shetlands and the Isles of Man, and he ravaged the coast of Scotland. In these islands he left a deputy governor, so founding the Norse principality of the Orkneys absorbed by Scotland at the close of the 15th century.

From the Viking colony in the Faroes one of the Norse leaders, Nadod, 860, sailing north-west sighted Iceland. He called it "Snowland" and said the island was barren. But Irish hermits had visited it in 795, and left traces of

their visit in crosses and bells. Other Norsemen followed him and Iceland was settled in 874 by Ingolf and Leif and other sheep farmers from the Farøes. An interesting fact noted in the Icelandic Landnamabok relates to the use of ravens as guides for the sailors of the northern countries.¹ "Raven Floke was guided to this country by the flight of birds."

Three years later, 877, Gunnbiorn sighted a great reef beyond Iceland which he called "White Shirt" from its snow fields and which Red Eric, a century later called "Greenland" in the hopes of a good name attracting settlers. Eric was exiled from Iceland for manslaughter so he was willing to prospect three years in order to find a suitable place in which to make a colony. He colonized Eric's Fiord, the starting point for the adventuring of the Norsemen.

During the age of the conquests of Harold Fairhair, there were fierce attacks upon England from Norway and Denmark. The Winged Hats mastered nearly the whole of Northumbria and Mercia by 870. The desperate struggle for Wessex ended in the victory of Alfred and the peace of Wedmore, 878, which confined the Norse invaders to the north and north-eastern England.

These Viking pirates, harried by Harold Fairhair brought about the conquest of normandy. Rolf, a great

1. Beazley Vol. II p. 28

raider, was exiled by Harold. He went to the Hebrides, and from there to the northern coast of France, which he ravaged, and conquered Normandy.

Eric, the son of Harold Fairhair, when he was only twelve years old, went on an eight year war cruise, with his own five ships, in the Baltic, along the Danish and German, the French and Flemish, the British and Irish coasts. Finally he sailed north to Finmark and right up to Biarmaland, the country around the White Sea.¹ Before him only Othere had explored this region.

Othere determined to find out for himself how far north this waste land extended. He went far to the north and to the east collecting walrus-ivory, hides and tusks from little whales. He had the waste at his right and the open sea at his left all his journey. When he came to Biarmaland, he did not dare enter, but started trade with the natives in furs.

1. Ch. XXXIV Saga of Harold Fairhair.



Sea except the ... Eji, Gau and Tarim. The soil in the ground ... weathering made the soil unfit for cultivation ... there were rivers, and the land was made up of sand deserts, gravel-deserts, salt-steppes, loam-steppes, loess-land and rocky mountains.

Of these, the largest part were sand-deserts, but there were dunes in the gravel-deserts which bore enough vegetation for grazing groups. The steppes bore a salty vegetation good for sheep. The loam-steppes bore grass, flowers, camel-thorn and were the real pastures of the Nomads. Agriculture was possible in the loess-lands by irrigation. There were 3% of oases. The Rocky mountains were waterless, of black stone, cracked by frost and cold. From south to north the surface of the land was salt-desert, sand-desert, grass-steppes, park-like districts of grass and luxuriant trees on the Yenesee, pine forests, moss-steppes and the Arctic.

The climate varied from icy winters including dry snow-storms and sand-storms. The climate was a healthy climate even in Turkestan because of the air. It was rapid movement of the air who lived in it, premature mortality, especially among Altaian races, and ...



Nomadism was the product of this Asiatic underground. Agriculture was impossible. The northern part provided

summer pastures, the southern part ... NW Africa, W. Spain, and Atlantic Islands

Canaries, Azores, Madeira Group

Chapter II

MARITIME EXPLORATION 1270 - 1470

The sequence from the voyages of the Norse, into the Atlantic, to the voyages of the Italian, Catalan, Castilian, French, and Portuguese is geographical rather than chronological. Between these periods of maritime exploration stretches the long struggle of the arms, the commerce, and the religion of the Christian nations to conquer the East. That great defeat inspired the struggle to conquer the longer sea routes, and so to fulfill the desire to "bring back useful things for trade". It is a practical purpose which encourages the Mediterranean seamen to brave the inaction, fear and superstition of so many generations.

"All over Europe, at the beginning of the 15th century, merchants and sailors were beginning to speculate about new ways to the east. The portuguese, unaware that Pharoah Necho had solved the problem ages ago, were asking whether it was not possible to go around India by the coast of Africa. Their ships followed in the course that Hanno took to Cape Verde (1445). They put to sea to the west and found the Canary Isles, the Madeiras, and the Azores." This is an outline summary of the discovery of these islands which were further from the mainland than the Norseman had gone. It is too brief to dwell on the centuries of effort upon the part of the Italians; the mariners from the coasts of Spain and France and the mariners from Catalan coasts, especially from

the Balearics, who set out in 1346 to find the alleged River of Gold on the African coast beyond Cape Bojador;¹ and the French and Italians in search of markets in the Canaries and Azores in 1402 or in the Madeira group in 1351.²

A brief survey of what was known of these islands before the Middle Ages takes us back to the poems of Homer, where the ocean is treated as a river beyond which, at the earth's confines, were the Elysian fields which Hesiod and Pindar made to be surrounded by water so that the habitations of the blest were transformed into islands, and hence probably originated the name of the *Insulae Fortunatae* or *Fortunate Islands*.³ Strabo says, "The poets make mention of the Islands of the Blest and we know that even now they are to be seen not far from the extremity of Mauritania, opposite Gades (Cadiz). Now I say that those who pointed out those things were the Phoenicians who, before the time of Homer, had possession of the best part of Spain and Africa".⁴ Probably these Canaries were known to the Phoenician colony of Carthaginians established at Cadiz three thousand years ago. From this colony came the Hanno referred to in Well's brief summary. According to the *Periplus of Hanno*, the Greek translation of which still survives, he followed the African coast southward from the Straits of Gibraltar as far as the

1. This promontory was long the limit of the known world.
2. Beazley Vol. III p. 8
3. The Conquest of the Canaries Intro. Major.
4. Lib. 3

confines of Liberia (520 B.C.). He had sixty big ships, and his main task was to found or reinforce certain Carthaginian stations on the Morocco coast. Then he pushed southward. The voyagers passed on for seven days beyond the Gambia, and landed at last upon some island.

A still more wonderful Phoenician voyage supported by some archaeological evidence is related by Herodotus, who declares that Pharoah Necho of the XXVIth Dynasty commissioned some Phoenicians to attempt the circumnavigation of Africa and that starting from the Gulf of Suez southward, they did finally come back through the Mediterranean to the Nile Delta. They took nearly three years to complete their voyage. Each year they landed and sowed and harvested a crop of wheat before going on.

In Plutarch's Life of Sertorius two Lusitanian sea captains who have just returned from two islands, probably Lancerote and Fuerteventura tell of the fertility of the soil, the purity of the air and the happiness of the people.¹

Twenty years later there is a listing of five islands by one Statius Sebosus and preserved by Pliny. He calls the group Hesperides and calls them one Day's sail from the western promontory (Cape Non). He names them, (1) Junonia 750 miles from Gades (Cadiz), (2) Pluvialia, (3) Capraria 750 miles west of Pluvialia, and 250 miles beyond to the

1. Conquest of Canaries Intro. IV.

left of Mauretania and towards the ninth hour of the sun were the great Fortunate Islands, one called (4) Convallis, and one (5) Planaria. This information shows only that five of the Canary Islands had different names.

Pliny also gives the narrative of King Juba II who had sent out an expedition to explore the Fortunate Isles. He sent the following narrative to the Emperor. "The Fortunate Islands lie to the south-west, at 625 miles from the Purpurariae. To reach them, from the latter, they sailed 250 miles westwards and then 375 miles to the east. The first is called Ombrios and contains no traces of buildings. There is in it a pool in the midst of mountains, and trees like ferules, from which water may be pressed, which is bitter from the black kinds, but from the lighter ones¹ pleasant to drink. The second is called Tunonia and has a small temple built entirely of stone. Near it is another island having the same name. Then comes Capraria which is full of large lizards. Within sight of these islands is Nivaria, so-called from the snows and fogs with which it is constantly covered. Not far from Nivaria is Canaria, so-called on account of the great number of large dogs therein, two of which were brought to King Juba. There were traces of buildings on this island. All the islands abound in apples, and birds of every kind, and in palms covered with dates and in the pine nut. There is also plenty of honey. The papyrus grows there, and the silurus fish is found in the rivers."²

1. Sugar -cane.

2. Pliny Nat. Hist. lib. 6, cap. 37

These islands find their counterparts; Nivaria in snowy-peaked Teneriffe; Palma has a famous cauldron, the crater of an old volcano which is like the pool in Ombrios; the island of Capraria corresponds to the island of Ferro. When Jean de Bethencourt's Chaplains visited it, they remarked upon the "lizards as big as cats, but they are harmless, tho' very hideous to look at".

After this for thirteen centuries the Fortunate Islands are forgotten. The destruction of the Roman Empire (re)-plunged Europe into ignorance. The eminent Portuguese scholar, Senhor Toaquim Tose da Costa de Macedo has elaborately shown that the Arabs had no practical knowledge of the Canaries before the times of the Portuguese discoveries. He maintains that the only notions respecting them were such as were derived from Greek and Latin authors.¹

Ancient Geography supports the record of a Genoese fleet (1270) which sailed into the Atlantic and rediscovered these "Fortunate Islands" our Canaries which had been dimly perceived by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans of the Ancient World.² Of this Genoese expedition³ we know very little. It was led by Lancelot Malocello. What he and his companions sought is indefinite. Their vessels were armed prepared for discovery, conquest or colonization. Petrarch commemorates this cruise as "within the memory of

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1. Conquest of the Canaries Intro. VIII. Major
 2. Beinbury Ancient Geog. II 81-2.
 3. Beazley III 411-412.

hid parents".¹ Proof of it is found in the red cross of Genoa upon the island of Lanzarote in the early Portolano maps as the Dulcert of 1339;² the Laurentian of 1351, and the Conoscimiento of about 1345, but no written mention is made of it until May 1402 when the record of the French invaders says that Gadifer de laSalle stored barley in an old castle in Lanzarote which had been built by Lancelot "Maloisiel" when he conquered that country.³ Count Baldelli Boni, in his valuable edition of the Milione of Marco Polo, published in Florence in 1827 remarks that no Venetian or Pisan or Catalan would be the first to lay down on a map so important a fact in favour of their rivals the Genoese. A stronger argument rises from the use of Genoese dialect in the names, especially in the name of the old castle referred to.

That the Canaries were visited, but visited only, by the Portuguese in 1345⁴ is proved by a passage in a letter from Alfonso IV, King of Portugal to Pope Clement VI. When Pope Clement VI called France and England to Avignon to negociate a three year's peace in Jan. 1343, Don Luis de la Cerda of Spain was one of the plenipotentiaries. He represented to the Pope that there were islands in the ocean named the Fortunate Islands, some of which were inhabited and some were not, but which he wished to possess for the spread of Christianity and the exaltation of the Faith. He

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1. Petrarch was born 1304.
 2. The earliest Portolan which marks any re-discovered Atlantic Islands. Beazley Vol 3 p. 413.
 3. Beazley thinks the I Capracia on this map refers to the Madeira group. Vol. III p. 446, note 2.
 4. Cheney says 1341.

winter pastures to one and the same Nomad people. They were necessarily mounted to make progress, and there could be no wagons on these trackless areas, mountain, valley, river, and swamp.

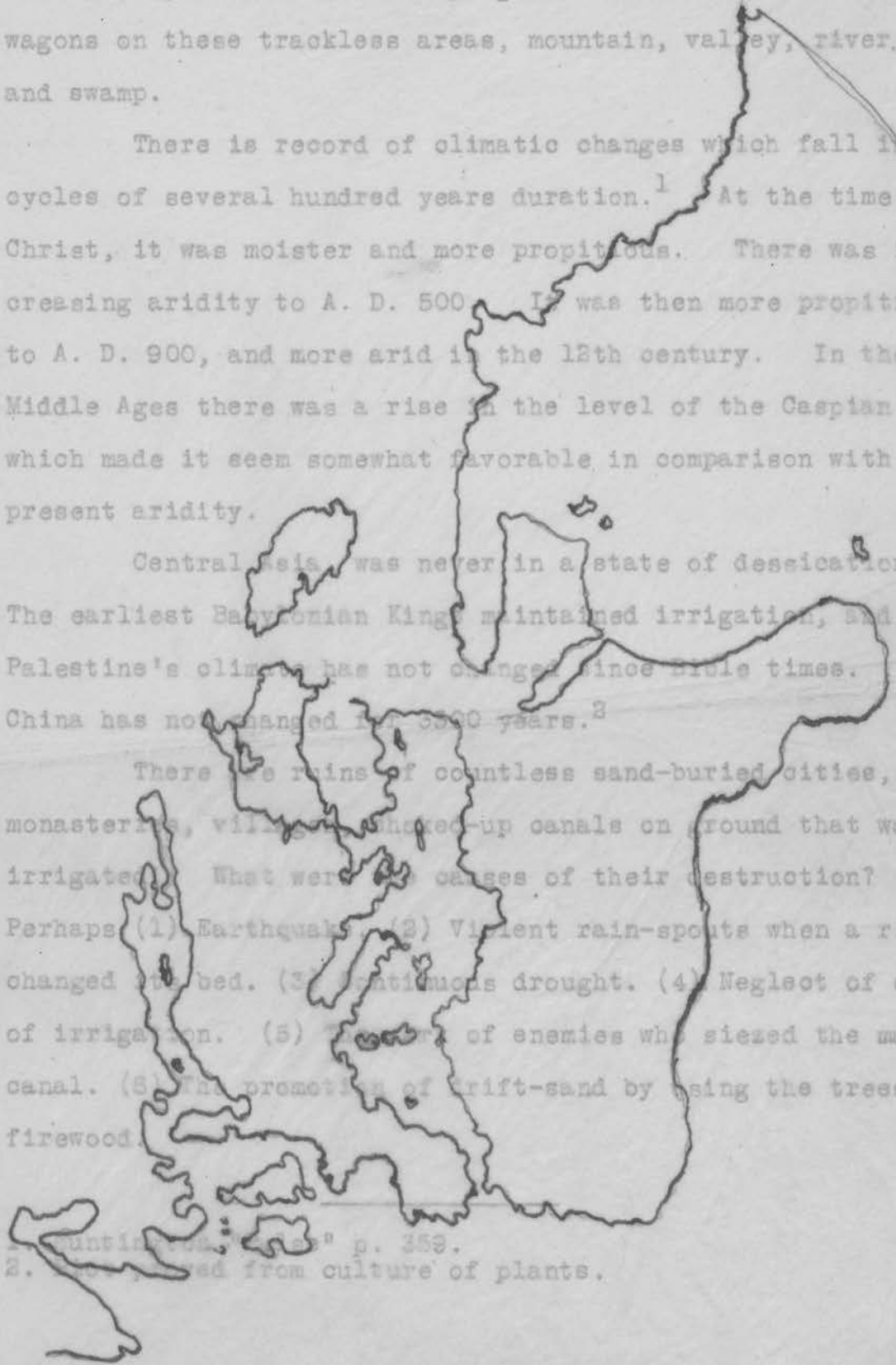
There is record of climatic changes which fall into cycles of several hundred years duration.¹ At the time of Christ, it was moister and more propitious. There was increasing aridity to A. D. 500. It was then more propitious to A. D. 900, and more arid in the 12th century. In the Middle Ages there was a rise in the level of the Caspian Sea which made it seem somewhat favorable in comparison with present aridity.

Central Asia was never in a state of dessication. The earliest Babylonian King maintained irrigation, and Palestine's climate has not changed since Bible times. China has not changed in 3500 years.²

There are ruins of countless sand-buried cities, monasteries, villages, wharfed-up canals on ground that was irrigated. What were the causes of their destruction? Perhaps (1) Earthquakes, (2) Violent rain-spouts when a river changed its bed, (3) Prolonged drought, (4) Neglect of care of irrigation, (5) Invasion of enemies who siezed the main canal, (6) The promotion of drift-sand by using the trees for firewood.

1. "The Desert" p. 359.
2. Derived from culture of plants.

OUTLINE of Laurentian Portolano 1351



prayed his Holiness to grant him the necessary authority, and to give him the title of King of these islands. The Pope granted his request in a Bull from Avignon Nov. 15, 1344 in a title of Prince of Fortune in perpetual fief to the Apostolic See, paying annually 400 florins of good pure Florentine coinage. Don Luis acknowledged the fief in the same year. The pope wrote letters to the Kings of France, of Sicily, of Aragon, of Castile and of Portugal, as well as to the Dauphin and to the Doge of Genoa desiring them to help the new king in his enterprise. In the reply of the King of Portugal he respectfully reminds his Holiness that he had already sent out expeditions to those islands and was only prevented from sending out a large armada by his wars first with Castile, and then with the Saracens. He excuses himself from furnishing Don Luis with ships and soldiers but pledges provisions and supplies. The letter is dated Feb. 12, 1345.¹

Evidence of one of these Portuguese voyages is in a narrative by the poet Boccaccio under date of 17 Kalend of December, 1341, which follows in part, "On the 1st of July of that same year, two vessels, furnished by the King of Portugal with all the necessary provisions, and accompanied by a smaller vessel, well-armed and manned by Florentines, Genoese, Castilians and other Spaniards, among whom were naturally included Portuguese, for the word Hispani included

1. Conquest of Canaries. Major XIII.

all inhabitants of the Peninsula, set sail for Lisbon, and put out into the open sea. They took with them horses, arms and warlike engines for storming towns and castles, in search of those islands commonly called the "Rediscovered". The wind was favorable and upon the fifth day they found land. They did not return until November, when they brought with them four natives, a large quantity of goat skins, the fat and oil of fish, and seal skins, red wood which dyed almost as well as the verzino (Brazil wood), etc. Nicoloso de Recco, a Genoese, the pilot of this expedition, stated that this archipelago was nearly nine hundred miles from the city of Seville, but that reckoning from what now is called Cape St. Vincent, the islands were much nearer to the continent and that the first of those which they discovered was a hundred and fifty miles in circumference."

Meanwhile the Prince of Fortune made but little progress towards the acquirement of the royal domain which the Pope had given him, and there is no story of further voyages to the Canaries until the one a century and a half later by Jean de Bethencourt and Gadifer de la Salle.

Before recounting their adventures, there is the account of two Genoese citizens to be noted, Tedisio Doria and Ugo Vivaldi, who equipped two galleys and sailed out to the southward with the object of reaching the ports of India but were never heard of again.¹ There is a curious point.

1. Cheney European Background 50.
Peschel Zeit alter der Entdeck ungen 36.

cited in connection with this voyage.¹ In the legal archives at Genoa two galleys belonging to Tedisio Doria are registered under the names of Allegranza and St. Antonio in the very year which was marked by this great expedition in search of the Indies. In the 14th century there is one island of the Canaries just north of Lanzarote named Allegranza. But Allegranza is not an uncommon name and there is no proof to show that any ship of this expedition touched on one of these ocean islands.

Their definite purpose was trade, not an indefinite attempt to pierce the unknown, but to go by sea to the regions of India and bring back things useful for trade. They sailed out of the Straits of Gibraltar and down the Moroccan coast beyond Gozora or Cape Nun in 28 47' N. Latitude. After that all trace of them is lost but when Tacopo Doria recorded this voyage of a member of his house, in 1294, he said they still prayed for their return.² Certain Genoese documents tell that Sorleone de Vivaldo, son of Ugolino sorely troubled by his father's absence undertook a search for him in 1315, and in the course of his wanderings, made his way as far as Magodexo on the Somali coast.³ Magodexo was a well-known centre of Mohammedan civilization on the shore of the southern ocean. Marco Polo had probably heard of it and Ibn

1. Beazley Vol. III p. 413.

2. Jacobi Aurae Annales in Pertz Monumenta Germaniae Histori-
catom XVIII p. 335.

3. Beazley Vol. III pp. 535-536.

Batuta visited it later.¹ It was a flourishing trade center where Sorleone might easily have heard of his father's expedition. He did not trace them but further account is found in the letters of a Genoese seaman Uso de Mare writing to his creditors in Genoa on Dec. 12, 1455. In Gambia he had met a survivor of the Vivaldi expedition who told how one galley had stranded in the Sea of Guinea, while the other passed on to a city of Ethiopia, called Mena, lying on the sea-coast near Gihon and inhabited by Christians, subjects of Prester John. These Nazarenes seized them and kept them in close captivity.² Gihon was the word used for Nile in that day and perhaps this story gave rise to that search for a Western or Negro Nile. Prince Henry and his captains were in constant hope of coming upon Prester John and his true believers.

There is no further record of Italian discovery in the Atlantic.³ A Catalonian venture comes next. Tacme Ferrer's vessel started from Majorca in 1346 for the River of Gold (this Western Nile) and rounded Cape Bojador. This voyage is noticed in the Ugo di Mare's narrative and Ferrer's ship is depicted on the Catalan Atlas of 1375 alongside the Canaries with an inscription to prove some point beyond Bojador as the Finisterre of Africa.

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1. Beazley Libro del Conoscimiento de todos dos Reynos pp.113, 117-118.
 2. Beazley, d'Avezac Uso di Mare Narrative.
 3. Beazley Vol. III p. 429.

There are claims of the countrymen of Bethencourt and La Salle to great advances along the African coast beginning with the year 1364. ¹ Beazley thinks there is little proof of these pretensions. Such as they are they include the voyages of certain merchants of Dieppe to Cape Verde and the Rio Fresca in a bay still called the Bay of France. Here they traded ivory, amber and skins for bagatelles² and sailed down the coast as far as a village at the mouth of the Rio Sextos which they called Petit Dieppe. Here they loaded ivory and Malagueta pepper and returned to Dieppe, so beginning a commerce that lasted, according to this document, (Les navigations francaises, d'apres les documents inedis, according to M. Mergry, pp. 56-61) until 1666-1667, and included settlements, as the Mine Colony, along the Gold Coast.

These probable, if not assured commercial ventures, paved the way toward the venture of Jean de Bethencourt and Gadifer de la Salle, and perhaps gave them concrete information. In 1382 Francisco Lopez and twelve companions, having been driven by storm to the mouth of the Guiniguado in Grand Canary, took refuge and lived peaceably with the natives for seven years. Then the attitude of the Canarians changed and they slew them all, but they left a written trace. The Chaplains of Bethencourt tell that a young islander gave a

1. Beazley Vol. III pp. 434-436.

2. Bellefoud, "Yvoire, des cuirs, et de l'ambre pour ces bagatelles".

testament to Gadifer. "We have found" said the Chaplains, "the testament of the Christian brothers, thirteen in number, whom they killed twelve years ago, which testament says that none ought to trust them for their fair outside demeanor, for they are traitors by nature."

M'd'Avezac in his work on the "Iles d'Afrique" says that in 1476 Queen Isabelle of Castille instituted an inquiry as to the respective rights of the various pretenders to the Canaries, and that there is a document in the Escorial declaring that Bethencourt received information from two French adventures respecting these islands. These were in company with a Spaniard named Alvors Becerra who gave such information as to convince Bethencourt that the conquest and colonization of these islands would be profitable.

Now for his venture. First it must be said that the record of it is printed from the narrative of Pierre Boutier, the Benedictine and Jean le Verrier, priest, Chaplains of Bethencourt and has been revised by Pierre Bergeron (1630) to suit the views of the Bethencourt family so that the Lord of Grainville always figures as of more importance than Gadifer de la Salle.

M. Jean de Bethencourt, Lord of Grainville la Teinturiere, in the Pais de Caux in Normandy, conceived the project of conquering the Canaries. He gathered together a body of adventurers, among whom was a knight named Gadifer de la Salle. He took with him his two Chaplains, Brother

Pierre Boutier, a monk of St. Johns de Marnes and Jean le Verrier, a priest. These were the historians of the expedition. They started from Rochelle in 1402, stopping at Corunna and Cadiz and reaching the island of Graciosa in eight days. Thence they went to Lancerote where they were well received. They built a fort and named it Rubicon. Here they left Bertin de Berneval in charge and continued to Fuerteventura. Here Gadifer was left in charge while Bethencourt sailed back to France for provisions. Bertin excited a mutiny against La Salle and stole away with the supplies. La Salle made his way back to the Rubicon and found it short of both men and Supplies.¹

Meanwhile Bethencourt had received supplies from King Henry III, King of Castille on condition that he do him homage. He sailed back to Rubicon and, taking advantage of Gadifer's good work, subdued the Canaries. Gadifer felt that his interests were being slighted and they returned to France in different ships. But Gadifer realized Bethencourt's greater influence at the Court of Castile and gave up his interests, while Bethencourt pursued his and was made Prince of the Canaries. He returned to them. The two kings of Fuerteventura and their people became Christian acknowledging his sovereignty. He voyaged to France to get materials for his colonies and brought back with him his nephew Maciot de

1. It was because of his men's desertion that the Canariens attacked them. He stored grain in Malocellos' old "chastel" and withstood the siege. Beazley III p. 450.

Bethencourt. Him he left as lieutenant and traveled to Rome to obtain from the Pope a grant of a Bishop for his islands. He obtained this and he returned to his own house receiving from the bishop news of the islands and of the good government of his nephew until his death at his house of Grainville in 1425.¹

Maciot de Bethencourt was governor general of Lancerote, Forteventura, and Ferro, about 162 men in all, having their own churches and priests. In the Pagan islands there were, in Gomera about seven hundred men, in Palma about five hundred, in Teneriffe six thousand and in Grand Canary five thousand. With these war had been waged and from the captives much information had been gained. The Grand Canary was ruled by two kings and a duke but the real governors of the island were a group of about sixty knights of noble houses. They worked hard-valued iron more than precious metals, ate sheep, pig, goats, considering it an abomination to kill these and forcing this work upon Christian captives. They had wheat, but no skill to make bread, figs, butter, dragon's-blood, dates, etc.

The people of Gomera were less civilized having filthy customs.

The people of Teneriffe were better off, but they had no houses passing their time in huts and caves. Their chief.

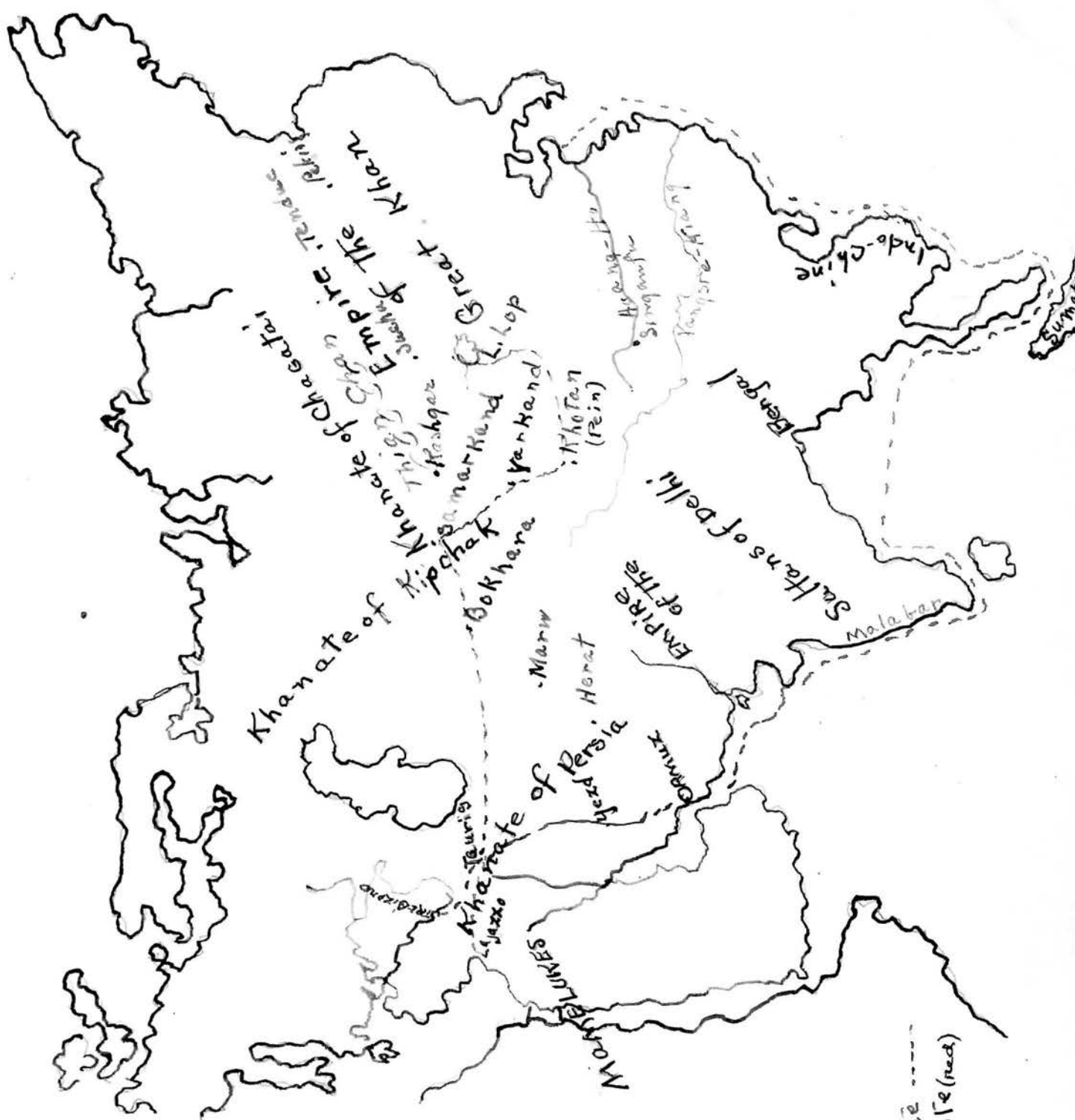
1. Conquest of Canaries Major pp. XXV Intro.

occupation was war. They had several tribes and kept a dead king unburied until his successor took his place. They were strong men, had their own wives and believed in God.

The people of Pálma lived on mutton, milk and herbes. They pointed their war-spears with horn instead of iron. They had chiefs instead of kings and were pagan.¹

The Portuguese visiting these islands often made prisoners and slaves of the natives, and brought them to Portugal, and those islanders living under the sovereignty of Maciot de Bethencourt were not fortunate. In 1414 Queen Catherine of Castile sent out four caravels under the control of Pedro Barbos de Campos to control Maciot. Though Jean de Bethencourt was still alive, Maciot gave the islands to Barbos and sailed to Madeira where he sold the same islands to Prince Henry of Portugal, surnamed the Navigator. Subsequently Maciot sold them to the Spanish Count Niebla. The legitimate proprietor left them in his will to his brother Reynaud. Henry of Portugal made two unsuccessful attempts to sieze the archipelago and the final solution of ownership takes place by the treaty of alcacova 1479, when Castille is recognized as mistress of the Fortunatae.²

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1. Gomez de Azurara 1448. Narrative on Conquest of Guinea for Prince Henry the Navigator.
 2. Major pp. XXXVI - XXXIX.



Land route ----
Sea route (red)

Chapter III

ASIATIC TRAVEL

No more unknown to the European of the time were the Fortunate Islands, than the world of the East wherein his greatest discoveries lay. These discoveries brought Europe into connection with distant regions, incredibly rich and populous radiating from the great and long-hidden civilizations of China and India. From the year 1213 the Roman church had seen the rise of the Tartar Empire of Ghenghiz Khan and his successors and the peril of the Christians of the Russian States, of Poland and of Hungary. The Greeks had broken communion with Rome, and the Tartars had weakened Islam. Wild hopes of Mongol conversion were entertained in the west and Latin Missions crossed Europe and Asia to the Court of the Great Khan. John de Plano Carpini (1246-1247), William de Rubruquis (1253-1255), Nicolo and Matteo Polo, uncles of Marco Polo (1255-1269) with many others, made their way to the headquarters of the Nomade princes, to Sarai on the Volga, to Karakorum near Lake Baikal and to the summer capital of Kublai Khan beside the wall of China.

A brief sketch of these fierce tribes who wakened Europe to a sense of peril by their invasions of the Orient, and of eastern Europe will show the source from which came this fierce barbarism and furious ability in war.

There is record of climatic changes in Asia which fall into cycles of several hundred years duration.¹ At the time

1. Huntington, "Pulse" p. 359.

of Christ it was moister and more propitious. Then there was increasing aridity to A. D. 500. It was more propitious to A. D. 900, and more arid in the 12th century.

These climatic changes were responsible for the origin of the Nomads, who like the peasantry of Turkestan were compelled to take to Nomad life through the degeneration of their fields and steppes to wastes. The Nomads from the North (Altaianrace) used their land for winter grazing ground, following the grass south as the year progressed. They traveled on horseback and the horse of this Turkoman was the noblest of animals noted for speed, endurance, intelligence, and faithfulness. It served for riding and for milk. Often it carried its owner hundreds of miles in a waterless country. This endurance was the inheritance of hundreds of years of plundering raids, for their life was continuous riding and warfare.

The Nomads were very disorganized, often fusing or separating under the names of their conquerors i.e. Seljuks, Uzbeks, Chagatais, Osmans. The chieftanship of a clan was usually gained by violent usurpation, and seldom was generally recognized. Often great hordes formed outside the folk.² At the head of these stood the Khagan or Khan, and among the Mongols, the Khan wielded unlimited authority over all.¹

The Mongols appeared first in the country to the north of China, in the land of the origin of the Huns, and Turks, and they were manifestly of the same strain as these peoples.

1. Cam Med. Hist. Vol I, pp. 323-359

2. Several clans formed a tribe several tribes formed a folk.

In the days of the Mongols, China first became known to Europe as Cathay or Khitai. The Khitans were a Manchu race who began to increase in power at the beginning of the 10th century and gained supremacy from the sea of Corea to the Altai. This supremacy increased until they overran the provinces of China adopting Chinese manners and customs, ceremonies and literature and gradually lost their warlike character and energy. In 1123 their leader declared himself emperor and founder of a dynasty under the name of Golden, the Kin of the Chinese. This dynasty prospered at first but by the middle of the 12th century had declined.

Golden's successor, Temuchin, afterwards known as chingkiz, was born of a Mongol tribe in 1162. His success against the nations led to His being saluted by the diet of his nation in 1206 as Chinghiz Khan. He commenced the conquest of China which was followed up by his son Okkodai.

Okkodai's armies produced frightful devastation in Poland, Moravia, Silesia etc., 1241. His death relieved a weak and disunited Christendom which seemed to lie at the foot of the barbarians.

In 1255 a fresh wave under Hulagu was directed towards the Ismaelians and Bagdad and Syria. Mangu Khan, the emperor then reigning was the last to attempt this universal sovereignty. His successor Kublai reigned effectively only in the eastern regions of the great realm.

It was Kublai Khan whom the Polos visited, and Kublai

to whom the Pope Innocent, after the council at Lyons 1245, sent missions calling on the tartar foe to shed no more Christian blood but to adopt the Christian faith.¹

Italian biographers inform us that the Polos were a patrician family of Venice. Andrea Polo da S. Felice had three sons, named Marco, Maffeo, and Nicolo, the two latter being great merchants. About 1254 or 1255 they proceeded on a voyage to Constantinople, for there were intimate trade relations between Venice and Constantinople at this time. At Constantinople they learned that a market for certain costly articles was to be found among the western Tartars so they purchased a stock of jewelry and with it crossed the Euxine to a port in Crimea; thence they traveled by land and water to a court or camp of Barkah, grandson of Jengiz-Khan whose places of residence were Sarai and Bolghar, places well-known to the geographers of the Middle Ages. They sold their jewelry and would have returned but they were prevented by warfare between Barkah and his cousin Hulagu whose Tartar hardes approached from the eastern side of the Caspian. Their route to Constantinople being cut off, they traveled by way of Bokhara and there met a Tartar emissary from Hulagu to Kublai his brother. This Tartar gentleman was so gratified at hearing them converse in his native tongue that he invited them to accompany him to the emperor's court. With some trepidation they complied and at the end of a twelve months journey reached the palace of the imperial khan.

1. Yule p. CXVI.

He was pleased with the two Venetians and determined to send them as his emissaries to the Holy See, professedly to ask for a number of preachers of the Gospel to communicate religious instruction to the people of his dominions, perhaps to encourage a hostile spirit amongst the Princes of Europe against the Soldan of Egypt and the Saracens, his enemies. The Tablet of the Khan insured the Polos safe-conduct and they reached Acre at the end of three years, April 1269.

Pope Clement IV had died, so, while they waited the election of a new pope, they sought their homes. Nicolo Polo found his wife had died and left him a son, Marco, destined to become a prince of mediaeval travelers, whom they took with them when Gregory X sent them as his messengers to the Khan. They prosecuted this journey in a north-easterly direction perhaps through Greater Armenia, Persian Irak, Khorea and by the city of Balkh into the country of the Badakshan among the sources of the Oxus where they stayed twelve months. Here Marco lay ill, and the heat was intense. Their route now lay through the valley of Vokhan and over the Pamirs, a cold, bare region with good hunting. Their caravan stopped at Kashgar to refit and continued to Khotan, a city well-known for trade of jade, wool, felt and hemp. Now they crossed the Gobi desert, a tedious journey of thirty days, reaching the district of Tangut, and by direct road to the province of Shen-si, and Kan-cheu. From Kan-cheu, they took the road to Si-ning (just within the nominal line of the

Great Wall, which on that side was built of sandy earth and had mostly fallen into decay) leading through the province of Shen-si and into that of Shan-si. In the capital city of Shan-si, named Tai-yuen-fu, the Grand Khan had his winter palace. He had news of them forty days before their arrival, and made ready for their reception. He welcomed them, commended their zeal, accepted their gifts of holy oil from the sepulchre of our Lord, which he hoped might possess extraordinary properties.

Observing young Marco, he made inquiries respecting him and took him under his protection, giving him an appointment in his household. Heyd says, "Koubilai distingua particulièrement Marco; celui-ci eut vite acquis la connaissance des divers idiomes et des divers écritures en usage dans l'empire du Grand Khan; il sut se plier avec égale facilité aux us et coutumes de l'Orient et fit d'année en année des progrès dans la confiance du souverain".

Kubilai kept the three Italians in China for three years, not by violence but by courtesy. "Pendant cette période, Marco exécuta au nom du Grand Khan, plusieurs tournées d'inspection dans l'Empire, fit un séjour de trois ans à Yang Chan comme gouverneur de province et finit par une ambassade dans l'Inde. Son père et son oncle rendirent également des services au prince, mais il ne semble pas qu'ils aient été comme Marco Polo, au service de l'Etat; ils s'occupaient plutôt d'affaires de commerce et surtout du commerce

des pierres precieuses, leur specialite. Enfin en 1292 tous quitterent definitivement la Chine, prirent la Mer, visiterent Sumatra, l'Inde, Ormuz, ou ils debarquerent, traverserent la Perse, s'embarquerent de nouveau a Trebizonde, et apres une escale a Constantinople et une autre a Negre point, ils rentrerent dans leur patrie en 1295. Au cours de ce long voyage, ils avaient eu encore diverses missions a remplir au nom de Koubilai; charge par lui d'accompagner jusqu'en Perse une princesse Tatare dmandee en mariage par le Khan de ce pays, ils avaient de plus a remettre divers messages au pape, aux rois de France, d'Angleterre, d'Espagne et d'autres princes encore.

Ainsi, par l'effet d'une serie de circonstances, le resultat fut d'ouvrir aux Europeens la connaissance de ce pays (Chine) et cela des l'abord d'une maniere complete et par des temoignages absolument dignes de foi. De toutes les descriptions de le Chine, ecrites par des auteurs arabes ou persans au Moyen-Age, depuis les premieres decouvertes des Marins de Siraf jusqu'aux tres interessantes relations d'un Ibn-Batuta et d'un Rachideddin, aucune n'est a comparer, mem de loin, a celle ou Marco Polo a consigne le resultat de ses logues observations personnelles et depeint non pas seulement les villes les plus frequentees et les plus importantes mais les pays tout entier, au triple point de vue de L'ethnographie, de la statistique et de l'economie politique. En digne fils d'une nation de commercants, il ne

perdait jamais de vue l'étude des produits naturels et fabriques des pays qu'ils traversait, celle du trafic grand et petit, des centres commerciaux et des routes, etc. Il est certain que ces descriptions (du bien-être de ces habitants du bon ordre regnant dans ce pays, de la richesse etc.) firent une grande impression sur le monde des affaires."¹

Marco Polo wrote the record of his travels and impressions after Sept. 8, 1296, when his galley was captured by the Genoese fleet which conquered the Venetian fleet of Andrea Dandolo. Altho' a prisoner in Genoa, he was treated with great courtesy by the principal inhabitants and so often urged to tell of his marvelous travels that the repetition became irksome to him. He sent to his father in Venice for his notes and wrote, with the assistance of a fellow-prisoner Rusticien de Pise² the manuscript of the Travels of Marco Polo, circulated in 1298.

As Heyd has said, his descriptions of countries and peoples and products made a great impression on the world of affairs. His book told of the salubrity of the air in the mountains of Bolashan; it described the specimens of the hair of the Tangut ox or yak which he took to Venice, and the head and feet of the musk animal; it described the assassination of Ahmed, and recounted Marco Polo's adventures as governor of Yang-chen for three years; he told of visiting six of the eight kingdoms of Asia Minor; described the seeds of a valuable dye stuff he had carried to Venice; he had seen

1. Heyd Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age 215-259
2. A well-known medieval writer Wright XXI.

the king of Maabar arrested for debt, and he thought the huge bird called the roc or rukh might have been a griffin - material enough to stimulate explorer, trader or adventurer.¹

There is a tendency to exaggerate in his statements and a strange omission of the things that did not interest the man of the world and the man of business. Two magnets that drew travelers from Europe to Asia before the days of the Polos were the interest in the Nestorian Missions which fought their way so stubbornly in China 635, during the 7th and 8th centuries founding churches in Hyrcania, Bactria, and various regions of Tartary down to the middle of the 11th century; and the search for the Asiatic priest-king Prester John,² of mediaeval Christian tradition which stimulated so much Catholic exploration. There wasn't a great deal of information for Marco Polo's readers upon either of these interests. He mentions the Nestorian Christians in connection with various locations, at Mosul, Tauris, Kashcar, Karkan, Sachion, Chinchitelas Jenduk, Kensanfu, Yachi and describes slightly three Nestorian churches in the city of Chan-ghian-fu.³

Prester John he identifies with a prince of the north named Un-Khan to whom the Tartars had formerly been in subjection. These Tartars had multiplied so that Un-Khan, i.e. Prester John became apprehensive of their strength. He

1. Book of Marco Polo.

2. See note 5 Prester John as Abyssinian Negus.

3. There are in this city three churches of Nestorian Christians which were built in the year 1278, when his majesty appointed a Nestorian named Mar-Sachis to the government of it for three years. By him these churches were established where there had not been any before, and they still subsist. Wright p. 309.

attempted to separate them into different bodies, who should take up their abodes in different tracts of country. The Tartars awoke to their danger and resolved to preserve their union and their liberty. They moved away in a northerly direction and when they were far away refused to pay tribute to Un-Khan. Later they elected for their king, 1162, a man who was named Chingis-Khan. Marco Polo acquired a great idea of this Khan's virtue when he was at the court of Chingis-Khan's grandson, and lauds his integrity, great wisdom, eloquence and valour. As Chingis-Khan prospered, he planned further greatness and sent ambassadors to Prester John demanding his daughter in marriage. When he was refused, he marched to attack Un-Khan's army, defeating and utterly routing it. Un-Khan was slain by Chingis-Khan; his descendant named George, held the country of Tenduk, as a fief of the grand Khan. There were two parts of this region, known as Gog and Magog; in each of which there was a distinct race of people. In Gog, called by the natives Ung, they are Gog; in Magog, called Mongul, they are Tartars.¹

Roger Bacon identifies the Tartars who were scourging eastern Europe with the Gog-Magog, and the armies of Anti-Christ, who had broken out of their Caucasian or Artic prison and come forth to desolate the world.

After the battle of Lignitz, April 9, 1241, and the ravaging of Silesia, Poland, Hungary and Moravia there were many appeals for common action against the enemies of Chris-

1. Book of Marco Polo Wright pp. 121-125.

tendom. At the council of Lyons, 1245, two missions were despatched from the Pope to the Grand Khan of the Mongols.

The first embassy was committed to John de Plano Carpini, a Franciscan, and it was to take a northerly course by way of Russia and Poland. The second under a Portuguese Franciscan named Lorenzo was to go south through Asia Minor and Armenia. John de Plano Carpini went through Bohemia, Poland, southern Russia, and the vast steppes of Turkestan and found the Khan at Karakorum, in Mongolia. He was two years on the journey, and after his return wrote an exact and interesting account of his observations and experiences.¹

Portuguese Lorenzo's mission must have been merged with that of Friar Ascelin.² Ascelin was coldly received by the Mongols and did not return until 1250. Both Carpini and Benedict were at the court of Louis IX upon their return and there discussed their mission with William de Rubruquis whom Louis IX sent next to visit the Mongol emperor. Rubruquis was a Fleming. He had seen the reception of one Mongol embassy by Louis IX. On his mission, he followed a more southerly route than Carpini, skirting the northern shores of the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Sea of Aral and then passing northward to Karakorum. Returning he crossed the Caucasus, and the lands of the Turks, finally reaching the Mediterranean through Syria. He wrote an account of his adventures which was much fuller than that

1. Travels of John de Plano Carpini (d'Avezac's Ed.).
2. Beazley Vol. III p. 277.

of Plano Carpini, and gives descriptions of China as well as of Asiatic lands.¹ The accounts of Plano Carpini and Rubruquis of the Tartars are remarkably alike which adds to the trustworthiness of both narratives.

Just at the beginning of the next century two other travelers, John de Monte Corvino and Odoric de Pordenone, both Italians, made journeys through Persia, India, southern Asia, and China, and later wrote accounts of these more southern lands quite as full as those of Plano Carpini or Rubruquis.

John de Monte Corvino was a Franciscan Missionary traveler, (1247 - 1328) the founder of Catholic missions in India and China. He hoped for the conversion of Arghun² the Mongol Lord of Persia and persuaded Pope Nicolas IV to send him as missionary to the great men of the Tartar world, to Arghun, Kublai and Kaidu chief of Turkestan and Siberia. He reached Tabriz either by the Trebizond or Lajazzo road and there was joined by a great merchant and faithful Christian, Peter of Lucolongo. They went to India and Ormuz and probably took the sea route to Cathay, as he remarks with dismay on the frailty of the vessels used for Indian navigation, "flimsy and uncouth without nails or iron of any sort, sewn together with twine like clothes, without caulking, having but one mast, one sail of matting and some ropes of husk".³

1. Travels of William de Rubruquis (d'Avezac's Ed.)

2. Beazley Vol. III pp. 163-178.

3. Letter from Friar Menentillus forwarding a copy of a letter from John de Monte Corvino. Yule p. 209.

He remained a year in the region of St. Thomas' shrine in the neighborhood of our Madras, and sent to Europe a sketch of the Deccan and its people from his own observation. "Oxen were sacred and idolatry rampant." It is a good picture of the first mission-energy in the Deccan, and awakened Rome to the possibilities of Hindu conversion.

While Friar John was journeying to Cathay, the Polos were returning to Venice. Now he represents Christendom in China during the next thirty years. His work was discouraging at first but at length he had the triumph of converting the Nestorean Prince George, "of the family of King Prester John of India." George built him a church and many Nestoreans embraced Corvino's faith but George's death put an end to these successes. His cathedral at Cambalich was his only relic of this pioneer work. There is a Franciscan tradition that he converted (1310) the Great Khan himself and that it was this rumor that led Pope Clement in 1312 to send out fresh missions.

Friar Odoric de Pordenone of Friuli says "I crossed the sea and visited the country of unbelievers in order to win some harvest of soul ----- I purpose to relate a multitude of the things I have seen and heard." His route was via Trebizond, Tabriz, Ormuz, Tana of India, Malabar, Ceylon, Madras (?) Sumatra, Java Bornes (?) Indo-China, Canton, Hangchau, etc. to Peking. His homeward route was via Prester John's country Tibet and N. Persia. This seems to be iden-

tical with the Tendu of Marco Polo. His descriptions are detailed and cover many more aspects of his travels than do the accounts of Marco Polo, touching on geography, people, queer customs, such as the compressed feet of the women, cormorant-fishing, etc., products, the pepper of Malabar, missions and the history in the making of the lands he lived in.¹

Much of his material was plagiarized by Sir John Mandeville in his book of travel, written by a probably stay-at-home, unscrupulous physician of Liege in the middle of the 14th century and published in 1357 -1371.² This compilation probably lessened the knowledge rather than added to it, for his misunderstanding of the sources he consulted was "wild and constant".

In the letters of Ricold of Monte Croce, there is the account of wanderings in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Persia of a baffled and discouraged missionary. He is a student and gives a studied account of the Tartars, agreeing with such observers as Carpini, Rubruquis or Marco Polo. He was always in serious conflict with the Nestorean Christians and was daily confronted with the proofs of the overthrow of Christian power in Syria. He saw the images of Christ and the Virgin desecrated. His epistles breathe gloom and discouragement.³

1. Yule I pp. 1-162.

2. Beazley Vol. III p. 321.

3. Beazley Vol. III p. 202. Yule thinks his journey did not extend beyond Baghdad.

Jordanus of Severac was a French Dominican, an explorer and a missionary (1321 - 1330). He headed an Indian mission following as far as Ormuz the track of the Polos, Corvino, and Odoric. The Nestoreans in the "Thomas" country persuaded him to leave his colleagues to preach to a near mission. He returned to find them, Thomas of Tolentino and others, fanatically killed by Mussulmen. He collects the relics and brings them to Supera. There are two letters and a collection of Mirabilia which contain his experiences in southern and south-western Asia. His letters are to fellow missionaries and prophecy the arrival of the European in Asia.¹

He mostly confines himself to his own experience. He begins with the Mediterranean and passes by Thebes and Negropoint to the Levant. Thence to Armenia and Persia, his mission field. Then to three-fold India where his main discourse is upon the regions he knew best Gujerat, Malabar and Travancore. On to Arabia, Chaldaeae, Georgia, the Caucasus and Turkey or Asia Minor, none of which were wholly unknown to him, and includes a hearsay lengthy discourse upon the Tartars.² He gives the first account of the Ethiopian Emperor, Prester John, and the heretical Christians who composed his people, seeming to lead the way to the African explanation of the Priest-King's story.

John of Marignolli, Franciscan traveler and missionary (1338 - 1353) concurs with Jordanus' description of the

1. Yule I p. 192.

2. Beazley Vol. III p. 223.

Abyssinian Prester John. He speaks of four sacred rivers, the Gyon, Phison, Tigris and Euphrates which passed through Ceylon. After accomplishing this feat the Gyon (which men supposed to be the Nile) encircled Ethiopia, the land of Prester John, where dwelt the negroes; and thence descended into Egypt, by a great "breach" at a place called Abasty, inhabited by the Christians of St. Mathew. To these Nazarenes, in fear lest they should dam the stream and ruin Egypt the Sultan paid tribute.¹

There are other missionary travelers, ex Marino Sanuto, the Elder, and there are Pegolotti, and Clavijo, whose missions were unconnected with Rome, the Nestoreans or any search for Prester John.

Marino Sanuto, the Elder of Torcello was a Venetian Statesman, political writer and traveler whose object was to revive the crusading energies of the western church, and to direct them both against the infidel and the eastern church. He wrote a Crusader's Manual which gives the trade-routes of the time and four maps² annexed make it of great geographical value. He gives a detailed and valuable picture of Syria in his Crusader's Manual, and a plan of a campaign against Islam with Christian fleets to dominate the Indian Ocean. He wishes to demonstrate the value of a Mongol alliance to secure permanent possession of the Holy Land, so he appends

1. Beazley Vol. III p. 305.

2. Inaccurate, having Aden in an African Island etc.
Beazley Vol. III p. 319.

a sketch of the history and manners of the people of Chingis, and of their past intercourse with Popes. His summary of Christian trade, and Christian possibilities extends from the coasts of the Indian Ocean to the ports of northern Europe.

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti (1315 -1344) was a merchant and traveler, not a missionary. His life was spent as a factor in the service of the Bardi of Florence. He wrote a merchant's handbook, a treatise of most solid character called the "Libro de Divisamenti di Paesi", "showing what relation the merchandise of one land or one city bears to that of others, and how one kind of goods is better than another, and whence come the variouswares, and how they may be kept as long as possible".¹ There is an account of the Azov-China route (via Astrakhan, Sarai, Saraichik, Khiva, Otrar, Kulja, Kanchau etc.) an account of Peking and Chinese pepper-money; Tana (Azov and the trade, weights and measures); Lajazzo-Tabriz rout (via Siwas, Erzingham, Erzerum); Trebizond-Tabriz route; markets of Cyprus, Egypt, Greek Empire, Black Sea, Constantinople, Alexandria, Damietta and the English markets and trade. A fine time table for the merchant of the day.²

The last of the greater Asiatic travelers are Clavijo the Spaniard and Schiltberger the German. They traveled an Asia where the international intercourse of a century or more

1. Libro di Divisanenti di Paesi e di misuri di mercatanzie, e d'altre cose bisognevoli di sopere a mercatanti p. III.
2. Yule 283. Beazley Vol. III pp. 324-332.

(1245 -1368) was really over. The strength of the Mongol Empire was ended. Henry of Castile sent envoys as spectators of the struggle between Turk and Tartar. Timur, the conqueror returned the envoys with flattering messages. Henry now sent a mission under Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo direct to Timur's court. Clavijo kept a close journal. He defines Timur's realm, as including all Mongolia besides Khorasan, Khiva, Persia, Media, Little Armenia, Kurdistan, Lesser India, the "lordships" of Rey and Ghilan, the "empire" of Tabriz and Sultaniyab, and the lands of Derbent, Erzinghian, and Erzerum.¹ He described routes in this first important Spanish exploration overland, and his experiences. Timur's greatness he emphasizes continually identifying with him the Prester John. His return was hastened by Tamerlane's death and the deluge came. Travel was precarious for a Frank. Almost a year was consumed in accomplishing their safe return to the Spanish Court.²

A luckless dweller in the Tartar world before and after Tamerlane's death was Johann Schiltberger, captive and slave, first of the Ottoman Emperor, then of Tamerland. He was a German of good family captured in battle at Nicopolis and in heavy bondage to infidels for thirty-two years. (1396 - 1427) He recorded his travel-record, the Reisebuch upon his return to Germany. It contained inside information of the holy places of Arabia; the first European knowledge of Siberia;

1. Beazley Vol. III p. 336.
2. Yule CXXXV.

Timur; Armenia, East Asia Minor, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, Caucasian lands, Persia, Babylonia, Baghdad, North India, Malabar, Central Asia, Samarcand, Kaffa; a sketch of the Tartars; an account of Egypt, Arabia, the Mamelukes, and a remarkable analysis of Eastern Christianity and its divisions. It is the work of a man of imperfect education often inaccurate and illogical but remarkable as first-hand knowledge, like Odoric's and covering a remarkably extended period of time.¹

As regards Christian intercourse between Europe and Asia, missions and merchants disappear soon after the middle of the fourteenth century as the mongol dynasty falls. There are other friars and Bishops dispatched from Avignon but lost in oblivion. The new rulers of China revert to the old policy and hold foreigners at arm's length. Islam recovers its ground and extends over middle Asia and the once flourishing Nestorean Christianity rapidly vanishes leaving only distorted traces in strange parodies of church rituals. When Jesuit missionaries come from Rome again a century and a half later they find slight traces of the former existence of these churches, and wonder, recalling Marco Polo, if China and Cathay are one.

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Note 1. The Dighton Writing Rock on the Taunton River near Berkeley in Massachusetts (in N. Lat. $41^{\circ}44'$) once claimed as a Runic inscription recording the voyage of Thorfinn Karlsefne, is now generally supposed to be of Indian Origin, though it has certainly been tampered with in very modern times. The Old Stone Mill at Newport in Rhode Island is a still more doubtful relic perhaps Indian, perhaps due to Gov. Benedict Arnold, but none of it can be with any certainty attributed to the Norsemen. The Skeleton in Armor discovered in the early part of the present century at Fall River, Massachusetts and immortalized in Longfellow's poem gives no evidence of Norse origin. Only one material object carries this evidence, the rock inscription of Kingiktorsok near the entrance of Baffin's Bay.¹ Cf. Laing and Anderson Prelim Disertation pp. 214 - 230. Beazley Vol. II pp. 75-76. Torfaeus and Arne Magnaeus incline to fix Vinland near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, or in Newfoundland. Storm argues for Nova Scotia. See Studies in Vinland voyages in Memoires de la Societe royale des Antiquaires du Nord, nouvelle serie 1888 pp. 344 - 346, 350 - 357.

Note 2. Two mss. of Saga of Eric the Red 1334, 1400 Book of Hauk A. D. 1334 (Hauk, a man who claimed descent from Thorfinn Karlsefne). Probably originally compiled in A. D. 1300. Second more elaborate text Flatey Book, which has been adopted

in certain manuscripts of the Heimskringla and is more widely known. Both Mr. Beazley and Mr. Reeves consider the Red Eric Saga as of superior authority where it clashes with the Flatey Book. But the agreements between the two are sufficiently numerous to warrant the belief that the Flatey presents a trustworthy record.

Note 3. Priest Ari Thorgilsson, the Learned, Gelli's grandson, was the first of men here (Iceland) to write ancient and modern lore in the northern tongue. He wrote chiefly in the beginning of his book concerning Iceland's colonization and legislation: then of the law speakers, how long each was in office, down to the introduction of Christianity into Iceland, and then on to his own day. Therein he also treats of much other old lore, both of the lives of the Kings of Norway and Denmark, as well as those of England; as likewise of the important events which have befallen here in the land and all his narratives seem to me most trustworthy.

Heimskringla, ed. Unger. Christiana 1166 pp. 2, 3. Reeves.

Ari, the Learned,¹ "the first man in Iceland who wrote down in the Norse tongue both old and new narratives of events" C.A.D. 1067 - 1147 (8). He wrote "240 years after the first settlement of Iceland by the Norsemen," C.A.D. 1117; but early writer as he was, another preceded him, viz Isleif, the first bishop of Iceland (appointed by Adalbert of Bremen, died 1047) who compiled histories of the Norse kings from Harold Fairhair to Magnus the Good.

1. Beazley Vol. II p. 72.

Note 4. The 1482 Ms. of Le Canarien is in the possession of Mme. de Mont Ruffet who inherited the volume through the channel of family relationship. Through the friendship of M. d'Avezac, Membre de l'Institut, Major was able to get a collation of this manuscript and the photographs. There is another edition prepared in 1625 by Galien de Bethencourt and published in 1630 under the editorial care of Pierre Bergeron. This Ms. is now in the National Library, No. 18629 among the French Mss. Major.