The Mystery of the “Marco Polo” Maps: An Introduction to a Privately-Held Collection of Cartographic Materials Relating to the Polo Family

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Introduction

As far as we know, Marco Polo left no maps related to his travels. Indeed, some have expressed doubt as to whether Marco Polo ever traveled at all, since the narrative about his trip to the Far East is second hand, penned by his cellmate in Venice, Rustichello. Moreover, the narrative seems to leave out key elements of Chinese culture such as the drinking of tea. But we do have the narrative itself, Il Milione, and the fact that this text played a key role for several centuries in both mapmaking and exploration. Toponyms from Marco Polo appear on maps even as late as the sixteenth century; Columbus owned and annotated a copy of the narrative, and was greatly influenced by the work. Yet Marco Polo himself traveled in a period that had yet to see the development of modern cartography, and most of the maps that survive from this time — the late thirteenth century — are simple world maps.

It was only with the publication of an article by Leo Bagrow in 1948 in the journal Imago Mundi that there appeared the possibility of a very close connection between the travels of Marco Polo, the narrative of Il Milione, and cartography. In his article, Bagrow presented a number of maps that belonged to a man named Marcian F. Rossi, an Italian who had immigrated to the U.S. in the latter part of the nineteenth century. These maps, Rossi claimed, came directly from the family of Marco Polo.

Rossi, in fact, had submitted photostat copies of some of the maps to the Library of Congress in 1933. The Library of Congress ended up receiving one of these maps as a gift from Rossi, the “Map with Ship,” so called because of a small illustration of a ship in the document. That map is still in possession of the Library of Congress. In 1933, the Library issued the first of a series of very brief notices on these maps, but no complete studies or publications were carried out. In late 1933 and early 1934, there appeared short articles on one of the “Marco Polo” maps in The New York Times, and in newspapers in Chicago and Minneapolis.

At that time, a careful — although also incomplete — study was done by Dr. William J. Wilson of the Library of Congress. Wilson prepared another report, of greater length, in 1953; this was entitled The Rossi Collection of Manuscript Maps and Documents, and gives a good overview of the materials. However, the report was for use only by the Library of Congress staff at the time, and was never published. There also was a brief notice in a journal by Lawrence Martin, who was at the time Chief of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress.

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4 See Bagrow, 3, n.1.

5 “Map of Marco Polo Trip Held Made by Daughter,” The New York Times (28 December 1933); “Marco Polo Map of 13th Century Believed Found,” Chicago Daily Tribune (28 December 1933); and “Marco Polo Map Found,” The Minneapolis Journal (1 January 1934).

Congress. Bagrow's article in 1948 was the first reasonably comprehensive scholarly analysis of the maps, but his work has some inaccuracies and omissions. The Library of Congress later put together a short summary of the collection and related materials, but this was never widely circulated. An interesting but also incomplete study of a number of the Rossi maps appeared in a rather obscure collection of Asian studies in 1965.

About six years ago, I came across Bagrow's article in the course of other research in the history of cartography. It took about two weeks to track down their current owner, a Texas businessman, who had inherited the documents from his great-grandfather, Marcian F. Rossi. The owner asked me to examine some of these documents, and do background research on the historical and cartographical context in which they can be assessed. This research resulted in a preliminary, privately distributed report on the content of the documents and a tentative genealogy tracing the Rossi family line from the thirteenth century to the present.

The owner and I also have worked closely with the Dr. John R. Hébert, the Director of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress. With the assistance of Dr. Hebert, as well as Dr. Ronald E. Grim (now retired from the Library of Congress), I examined the extensive correspondence between Marcian F. Rossi and the Library of Congress that is housed in the Geography and Map Division. In addition, the Library is currently carrying out radiographic testing on one of the maps, their "Map with Ship."

This paper is intended to provide an introduction to these maps and related documents in what we call the "Rossi Collection," in the hope of providing a framework for further research. We have selected a small sample for discussion here, in the interest of brevity for this publication, but a longer study has been prepared. Our focus here will be on the content and context of the cartographic documents, along with some tentative interpretation and analysis. The documents described here are part of a larger collection of materials in possession of the current owner and that were also passed down through the family. The other materials in the collection include diplomas, deeds, sheet music, and miscellaneous documents. Some of these materials were authenticated by an appraiser at the Philadelphia Rare Books and Manuscripts Company a few years ago. A few documents related to the early history of California (not authenticated) that are now in the collection were not part of it originally; Marcian F. Rossi traded other materials for these pieces.

The Origin of the Documents

The origin of the maps provides a story almost as intriguing as the documents themselves. When Marcian F. Rossi first corresponded with Leo Bagrow in the 1930s concerning these materials, he gave a brief account of how they had come into his possession. In his article, Bagrow reproduces part of Rossi's letter:

Marco Polo entrusted the maps to Admiral Rujerius Sanseverinus who had graduated the Nautical School at Amalfi. A number of centuries later his descendant Ruberth Sanseverinus married Elisabeth Feltro Della Rovere, Duchess of Urbino.

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In the year 1539 Julius Cesare de Rossi, Count of Beretto, married Maddalena Feltro Della Rovere Sanseverinus to whom the Tenure of Cajiata was assigned; his grand-son Joseph de Rossi became Duke of Serre; this tenure was held till 1744, when it was transferred to the Duchy of Casale to [of?] Joseph de Rossi; his younger brother Antonio de Rossi was the father of Marciano de Rossi, my great-grandfather...¹⁰

Bagrow does not examine this “lineage” in his article, but it is worth doing so. The first mystery is this “Admiral Rujerius Sanseverinus.” Who was this admiral and what was his relationship to Marco Polo? The most logical conclusion is that Marcian F. Rossi was referring to Ruggero Sanseverino, who was also known as “il Grande Ammiraglio.” Ruggero (or “Ruggiero”), who died in 1305, was also known as “Ruggero di Lauria,” from the town of Lauria where he was born. He was admiral of Sicily and Aragona; but did he in fact receive any maps from Marco Polo? We no have no record of such a transaction, but the two men were contemporaries; Marco Polo returned from his long trip in 1295, and lived for almost thirty years after that.

Several of the other claims that Marcian F. Rossi makes also seem to stand up to modern research. The “Ruberth Sanseverinus” he mentions is Roberto Sanseverino (d. 1487/1488), and he indeed married an Elisabetta (da) Montefeltro (d. Rome 1503), who was the illegitimate daughter of the famous Federico, Duke of Urbino. The “Julius Cesare de Rossi” that is mentioned is Giulio Cesare de Rossi, who was assassinated in 1554. After Giulio Cesare de Rossi, the lineage becomes more difficult to trace, but genealogical work remains to be done. There was, as Marcian F. Rossi claims in his letter, a “Joseph de Rossi” (Giuseppe de Rossi) who indeed held the title of Secondo duca di Casal di Principe. Investigations have yet to verify the rest of the lineage that Marcian F. Rossi outlines, but again, there is still work to be done in this area.

Several decades later, the maps and documents of the “Rossi Collection” ended up in the possession of the current owner. It may be that Rossi had more materials than exist in the collection as it stands today. The current owner believes that some of the documents may have been lent out and not returned, or perhaps traded or sold in the 1930s or later. The owner is interested in having a thorough study of the materials carried out, and recently commissioned a series of study photographs of the majority of the documents. He hopes that the Library of Congress will also assist in the continuing investigations into the interesting history of this collection.

The Documents: An Overview

The Rossi documents themselves are now in possession of the great-grandson of Marcian F. Rossi; as pointed out, the current owner is interested in further research into the nature of the collection, as well as answers to some of the genealogical questions that the materials pose. The collection comprises a number of pieces, both maps and texts. There are also many pieces unrelated to Marco Polo, including old deeds, wills, and so forth; those will not be discussed here, but merit a separate study.

¹⁰ Bagrow, 3.
There are fourteen documents that concern Marco Polo and his travels; a brief inventory is given below. Note the many connections between the various maps and texts:

Document 1 (= "Sirdomap Map")
A map of northeastern Asia with toponyms, referred to as the "Sirdomap Map," with Arabic lettering; the map has a short text in Italian below it, apparently written by Bellela Polo, and mentioning a certain Syrian navigator named "Biaxio Sirdomap." The map has toponyms referred to by a series of Roman numerals. See Document 2 (= "Sirdomap Map" Text) and Document 3 (= "Bellela Polo Chronicle").

Document 2 (= "Sirdomap Map" Text)
A short text in "Arabic" lettering, followed by an Italian text, with the date written as "1267." Allegedly, this text was written by Sirdomap; see Document 1 (= "Sirdomap Map") and Document 3 (= "Bellela Polo Chronicle").

Document 3 (= "Bellela Polo Chronicle")
A text concerning Marco Polo and Sirdomap; this text is in Italian, and apparently written by Bellela Polo. See Document 1 (= "Sirdomap Map") and Document 2 (= "Sirdomap Map" Text).

Document 4 (= "Map with Ship")
A map of eastern Asia, along with a picture of a sailing vessel; it is currently held by the Library of Congress. This map has inscriptions in Italian, Arabic, and Chinese.

Document 5 (= "Pantect Map")
A map of eastern Asia, with an attached accompanying text, referred to as the "keynote" by Bagrow.\(^1\) This "keynote" is now missing; see Document 13 (= "Keynote to Pantect Map").

Document 6 (= "Fantina Polo Map 1")
A map covering Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with a "longitude / latitude" grid; the place names here are referred to by a series of Roman numerals. The map is signed "Fantina Polo" with the date written as "1329." Very similar gridded configurations are found in Document 8 (= "Moreta Polo Map 1") and Document 14 (= "Moreta Polo Map 2").

Document 7 (= "Fantina Polo Map 2")
A map depicting East Asia, a strait, and a peninsula with a chain of islands; the drawing is set in an oval frame. A series of Roman numerals refer to a set of toponyms. It is signed "Fantina Polo" with the date written as "1329"; toponyms are referred to by a series of Roman numerals. Document 9 (= "Lorenzo Polo Chronicle") includes a variant of the text that appears here; also note Document 6 (= "Fantina Polo Map 1").

Document 8 (= "Moreta Polo Map 1")
A map covering Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with a "longitude / latitude" grid; the map is signed "Moreta Polo" with the date written as "1338." A very similar configuration is found in Document 6 (= "Fantina Polo Map 1") and Document 14 (=

\(^1\) Ibid., 5.
“Moreta Polo Map 2”) — that latter map is reproduced and discussed in Bagrow, but is currently missing from the collection.

Document 9 (= “Lorenzo Polo Chronicle”)
A text concerning the Polo family and concerning manuscripts left by “Rugiero Sanseverino”; the text is signed “Lorenzo Polo, Protonotario, Cajatia, 1556” at the bottom of the last page, while other passages in text are signed “Carlo Sperano,” “Fantina Polo”, and “Moreta Polo”.

Document 10 (= “Map of the New World”)
On the recto, a map of Europe, North Africa, and North and South America; here the Americas are labeled Columbia Septentrionalis and Columbia Meridionalis. There is accompanying text in the form of a letter that is addressed to “Elisabetta Feltro della Rovere Sanseverino”, and signed “Guido Spinola”; below the signature, one reads: “Cagliari, 20 October 1524.” On the verso, a text mentioning Antilla and the explorer Hernando Cortez.

Document 11 (= “Columbus Map”)
A map of the New World, with a brief text; the text is signed “Giani [?] Roberto Sanseverino” and labeled “Casatia, 9 January 1620.”

Document 12 (= “Spinola Chronicle”)
A text in the form of a letter to “Elisabetta Feltro della Rovere Sanseverino” and signed “Guido Spinola,” along with the words “Cagliari, 25 November 1524.”

Document 13 (= “Keynote to Pantez Map”) — missing
A text describing a voyage by Marco Polo to a chain of islands and a large peninsula in the Far East; this document is reproduced and discussed by Bagrow in his article, but is now missing from the collection.12

Document 14 (= “Moreta Polo Map 2”) — missing
On the recto: a map of Asia, with an oval cartouche containing an inscription in Italian; on the verso: a map covering Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with a “longitude / latitude” grid. The map is signed “Moreta Polo”, and has an inscription mentioning Antilla; this document is discussed by Bagrow in his article, but is now missing from the collection.13 Very similar gridded configurations are found in Document 8 (= “Moreta Polo Map 1”) and Document 6 (= “Fantina Polo Map”).

The documents are all on parchment, with the maps and text done in ink. Most of the texts are in Italian; there are also shorter passages in Latin, Arabic, and Chinese. Most of the writing is very clear; there appears to have been erasing or modification in only a few cases, primarily in Document 4 (= “Map with Ship”). As noted above, two of the documents are missing, and the current owner believes that there may have been others in the collection at one time as well that are also now missing.

12 Ibid., 5, and fig.4.
13 Ibid., 4, and figs.2 and 3.
Content and Context

The documents present a great deal of complex and interrelated cartographical and historical material. What follows is a look at the content of a selection of the documents, along with a partial contextual analysis.

The “Sirdomap Map” and the “Bellela Polo Chronicle”

The first three documents in the collection refer to a Syrian mariner named “Biaxio Sirdomap”; such a person is not mentioned anywhere in the Polo narrative in the extant versions. The first of this series of documents is a map of northeastern Asia, with toponyms in Italian referred to by the Roman numerals one through five; other toponyms on the map itself are written in some kind of Arabic text (see Fig. 1). The toponyms in Italian read: I / *penisola de li zervi* // [i.e., “Peninsula of the stags”], II / *penisola phoca marina* // [i.e., “Peninsula of the Marine Seal”], III / *Valle conzonta e giazata* // [i.e., “Connected and frozen valley”], IV / *Isola de le femene* // [i.e., “Island of Women”], and V / *Eolfo [i.e., Golta] Mangi* // [i.e., “Gulf of the Mangi”]. The Arabic inscriptions read as follows: “Land of China”, “Ghadhil (?)”, “Linwan (?) Castle”, “Dog of the Sea [= seal / sea lion?]”, and “Frost”.

The second piece in this series of three documents is a short text in this same Arabic script, followed by an Italian text on the same page (see Fig. 2). The Arabic text is somewhat difficult to decipher; a partial translation is as follows: “...Departed from Syria to the land of frost... the pelt of seal / sea lion... they speak a local tongue... Tartar (?)”. The Italian text is much longer, and states that Marco Polo obtained this map from Biaxio Sirdomap who “for at least thirty years, had sailed the coasts of Asia from Syria to the Far East, trading in seal skins.” The text also states that “Marco Polo sailed from the Gulf of the *Mangi* to the east as far as the Peninsula of the Stags”; the implication here, of course, is that Polo traveled far beyond China, something not at all indicated in *Il Mileone*.

However, the version of the Polo narrative in the *Navigazioni et Viaggi* of Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485 - 1557) has some peculiar extra details not found in the other versions of the Marco Polo narrative. In Ramusio’s version of the Polo narrative, we find a brief discussion of the distant eastern regions of Asia. In 1558, Giovanni Battista Ramusio published the second volume of his *Navigazioni et Viaggi*; there, he dealt with the Far East, and included an account of Marco Polo’s travels. A passage from Polo as found in Ramusio also seems to hint at the Pacific coasts of North America, mentioning in the last line that there seems to be in these distant regions un altro mondo; this seems to be the closest connection between Ramusio’s text and the depiction we find in these Polo maps and texts:

*Partendosi dal porto di Zaitum, si naviga per ponente alquanto verso garbin mille e cinquecento miglia, passando un collo nominato Cheinan, il qual collo dura di longhezza per il spazio di due mesi, navigando verso la parte di tramontana, il qual per tutto confina verso scirocco con la provincia di Mangi, e dall’altra parte con Ania e Toloman e molte altre provincie con quelle di sopra nominate. Per dentro a questo collo vi sono isole infinite, e quasi oro di paiola, qual si raccoglie dell’aqua del mare dove sboccano i fiumi, e ancora di rame e d’altre cose: e fanno mercanzie di quello che si trova in un’isola e non si truova nell’altra. E contrattano ancor con quei di terra ferma, perché li*

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14 I wish to thank Dr. Amir Harrak, Professor of Aramaic and Syriac at the University of Toronto, for these translations.
Figure 1. Document 1 ("Sirdomap Map"), recto
vendon oro, rame e altre cose, e da loro comprano le cose che sono loro necessarie. Nella maggior parte di dette isole vi nasce assai grano. Questo collo è tanto grande, e tante genti abitano in quello, che par quasi un altro mondo.

Departing from the port of Zaitum, you sail towards the west, somewhat southwest, 1500 miles, traversing a gulf named Cheinan. This gulf is so long that it takes two months to cross it, sailing towards the northeast. Towards the southeast, it washes the entire part of the province of Mangi, and on the other side, Ania, Toloman, and many other provinces I have mentioned previously. Within this gulf there are an infinite number of islands, almost all well inhabited, in which there is found a great quantity of gold of paiola [literally "straw"; here the phrase seems to mean "gold dust"], which they collect from the water of the sea where the rivers empty into it. Besides this, copper [or brass] and other things are found, and commerce is carried on with what occurs in one island and not in another. They also trade with those on the mainland, selling gold, copper, and other things, and buying from them what things are necessary to them. In the majority of these islands, much grain grows. This gulf is so large, and so many people live in it, that it seems like another world.15

The mention of oro di paiola ("gold of paiola") also appears in the 1460 Fra Mauro map's Asian lands. To the west of his province of Mango, there is the province of Choncha, as far as the sea of Breuncto; near this is the inscription: Qui se trova ora de paiuola, i.e., "Here one finds the gold of paiuola."16 Things would be simpler if the information here on the exploration and cartography of northeast Asia was all found in the traditional narrative, Marco Polo's Il Milione, but it is not. Thus the contents of these Rossi maps and documents strike the reader as especially problematic.

The Ramusio passage above is part of a discussion in the narrative that deals with the seas around Zipangu, i.e., Japan. The German historian Christian Sandler noted that the information provided by the text is sufficient to put together the depiction we find in the 1566 Zalterius map.17 There is the land of Mangi, and a sea of the same name, with the isle of Giapan, and north of that a Golfo Cheinan, and then the province of Ania, to the northeast, in the altro mondo, the "other world" of Ramusio, there is the land of Toloman. Sandler also commented that it seems that the Venetian cartographer Gastaldi is the first to make this representation, i.e., a map with land beyond the farthest northeast reaches of Asia.18 Gastaldi first introduced this depiction in 1561, and repeated it in a small geographical work of ca.1562. In this work, he describes a world map, and the placement of the continents, while putting aside the depictions of Ptolemy.19 The fact that a work of this Italian cartographer would have such a strait between

16 Giacinto Placido Zurla, Il mappa mondo di Fra Mauro Camaldolese descritto ed illustrato... (Venice: [s.n.], 1806), 38.
19 Sandler, 404-405 and 404 n.3.
Asia and America is particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that he himself earlier had put forward a completely different view: in Gastaldi’s 1546 “Universale” map, North America links up with Asia along the 40 degree northern parallel. Other Italian cartographers also had such a link.\(^{21}\)

If one were to accept the evidence of the maps here in the Rossi collection, they could represent an earlier depiction of this idea of a separation of the landmasses: the northeast reaches of Asia, a strait, and then the coasts of North America. These maps in the collection, however, do not employ the terms *Anian, Toloman*, etc., and so it seems that their depictions are not based on a reading of the traditional Polo narrative.

Sandler argued that the description found in Polo accurately describes the regions of Kamchatka and the Kurile islands, adding that Polo may have received news of the farthest northwestern regions of North America.\(^{22}\) This would bring us a closer connection between the Polo narrative as we know it, and the peculiar depictions we find in the maps of the Rossi collection, with their representations of the farthest northeastern reaches of Asia and part of the New World. While it is impossible to confirm Sandler’s theory, we can at least see how Marco Polo’s narrative could have led Gastaldi — or someone before him — to draw these regions in this way. In fact, it is somewhat odd that the Rossi maps and texts concerning the furthest reaches of Asia never mention *Ania, Toloman*, or any of the other geographical information on the Far East found in the traditional Polo narrative. Instead, the toponyms on the Rossi maps tend to include a rather limited collection of place names from Ptolemy and from Pliny, a few from Chinese legend, and even fewer from Marco Polo.

The third document in the “Sirdomap” series is a text, apparently written by Marco Polo’s daughter, Bellela Polo, about her father and his encounter with this Sirdomap in the Far East (see Fig. 3). This last document is known as the “Bellela Polo Chronicle”, and is one of several pieces in the collection directly relating to Marco Polo’s daughters. This particular document, unlike the others in this “Sirdomap” series, has a direct connection with *Il Milione*. We read in the “Bellela Polo Chronicle”:

After Master Polo had become known in all of China for his zeal, the wife of Fafur, queen of the women in the province of the *Mangi*, entrusted to him a message for Fusint, queen of the women in the Far East, and put him in command of twenty Chinese and Saracen sailors, and with a big ship he set sail from the Gulf of [the] *Manji* and along the chain of small islands that cross the promontory on the east side of that gulf and then navigated to the east. Then he entered the ocean where suddenly there arose such a terrible storm that the compass needle swung from this side to that, forcing him to sail to the north side of a chain of islands that enclosed the sea, and stretched east as far as a peninsula where Master Marco Polo disembarked from the ship twenty-eight days after having departed from China.

\(^{21}\) Sandler, 405.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 406-408; Zurla, *Il mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, 114, states that Fra Mauro’s map includes Kamchatka: “[L’]ultimo confine della Siberia al Nord-Est sia espresso nella vicina curva piegatura del Continente settentrionale, e il golfo che la separa dalle regioni prominenti di Mongul alla Chinese Tartaria spettanti, debbasi riputare il mare di Kamtschatka, o golfo dell’Amur.” (“The last border of Siberia to the northeast may be represented by the adjoining bent curve of the northern continent, and the gulf which separates it from the prominent regions of Mongul, belonging to Chinese Tartary, so that one ought to consider [this area] the sea of Kamchatka, or the Gulf of Amur.”)
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Figure 3. Document 3 (=“Bellela Polo Chronicle”), recto
Marco Polo’s narrative does indeed mention a “Fafur” as a king of *Mangi* (what is now southern China). But the character of “Fusint” does not appear in *Il Milione*, perhaps this term is a confused rendering of the *Fuxin*, a city in northeastern China, but in the text here, the term refers to a person, not a place. The rest of the “Bellela Polo Chronicle” has more peculiar details of these far northeastern regions where “there are people who speak the Tartar language, and... go about dressed in sealskins, living on fish...” These are all details that, again, do not appear anywhere in *Il Milione*.

**The “Map with Ship”**

The next document in the collection is the “Map with Ship”, which still resides in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress (see Fig. 4). The work is an odd amalgam indeed: there is the map itself, in a kind of stylized frame; to the left, there is a rather crude rendering of a sailing ship. The map covers the northeastern part of Asia, a strait, and land beyond. The parchment appears as if it has been written on at different times, and there are bits of writing that have been scratched away. The famous former director of the F.B.I., J. Edgar Hoover, had his staff do a series of photographs of the map, culminating in a brief report delivered to the Library of Congress in 1944. This map is currently undergoing radiographic and chemical analysis by the Library.

In terms of content, this map is closely related to several of the other works in the collection. There is a string of crudely written Chinese characters, apparently copied from a Chinese source by someone not familiar with that writing system. On the map itself there are toponyms in Arabic script, but some areas of the map have a numbered key, with the Roman numbers I through IV. These numerals correspond to a list in Italian that is found to the left of the map, below the drawing of the ship:

I. *India e part[en]e isole secondo come dixo[n]o li saracini.* II. *Cattigara de tartaria isole de Ziparang e isole pertinente.* III. *Peninsula de li lioni marini.* [IV] *Isole consonte a la penisola de li servi situata a IV hore de varietade de le provinzie amurade de tartaria.*

I. India and adjacent islands, according to the Saracens. II. Cattigara of Tartary, [the] islands of Japan, and adjacent islands. III. Peninsula of the Sea Lions. IV. Islands connected to the Peninsula of the Stags, situated at four hours difference from the walled provinces of Tartary.

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23 Bagrow notes that the famed sinologist K. B. J. Karlgren could only decipher a few of the Chinese characters, and those could be translated as “...their names come from olden times”. The characters have been crudely copied, it seems, and indeed only a few can be read clearly. From the eleven characters in the inscription, I can make out the following ones with a measured degree of certainty: 丁, 百, 半. 七, 四, 邑, and 魚.
The term “Saracens” refers to Muslim navigators, who seem to be indicated as one of the sources for this map. The mention of a “Peninsula of the Sea Lions” and the “Peninsula of the Stags” reminds us of identical terms on Document 1 (= “Sirdomap Map”).

Between the “Peninsula of the Sea Lions” and the “Peninsula of the Stags”, the map shows a narrow strait. This strait is very much like a strait in this region we see in European maps of the sixteenth century and later. The cartographic figures on the “Map with Ship” bear some similarities to the aforementioned cartographical concepts of Gastaldi, with a narrow strait separating Asia and the North American mainland. We find other representations that are also somewhat similar to that of the “Map with Ship” in Zaltieri’s map of 1566, and the map of Forlani of 1574. An even closer match is the Arrowsmith map of 1780, particularly its depiction of the regions around the Bering Strait. Precise knowledge of the remote regions of the northwest part of the American continent and the northeastern regions of Asia took a long time. It was not until the voyages of the Dane Vitus Bering in 1728 and 1741 that it became clear that there was a strait separating the two continents.

Prior to that, there had been speculations that there was some kind of waterway — the “Strait of Anian” — but others had believed that terra firma connected Asia and America. The Rossi maps discussed here appear to show input from Asian sources, with their Chinese writing. This raises the question of whether traditional European maps of these regions ever showed such influences. One example, in fact, does — although it is a fairly late work. The English cartographer Thomas Jefferys in 1768 produced a map entitled “Carte générale des découvertes de l’Amiral de Fonte.” This map showed the northern regions of Asia and America, combining accurate mapping of northeastern Russia with somewhat fanciful details of a northwest passage in Canada.24 But the important point here is that Jefferys placed clear labels on his map stating “partie copié de la Carte Japonoise” and, on a large stretch of land in northeast North America, “Indiqué par les Japonois.” Further east, the map also has “Partie Nord-est de la Mer de Tartarie représenté dans la carte Japonoise.”

Still, the depictions of the Rossi maps must be examined with care, since they represent a very unusual series of claims: (a) that Marco Polo traveled in the seas beyond China; (b) that he received information from a Syrian navigator there; (c) that he also incorporated Chinese knowledge of these regions, as evidenced by the Chinese text on the maps; and (d) that well before the voyages of Bering, these areas were explored and mapped by Marco Polo, and that this information was passed on to his daughters.

The “Fantina Polo Maps”

Historical records tell us very little about Marco Polo’s daughters, so it is rather suprising that a whole series of documents in the Rossi collection contains their comments about their father’s travels. The names of all the daughters — Fantina, Bellela, and Moretta — appear in a number of these maps and texts, which relate and refer to each other in various ways. The first document in this series, the “Fantina Polo Map 1,” is a map covering Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with a kind of “longitude / latitude” grid (see Fig. 5). There are also place names referred to by a series of Roman numerals. The map is signed “Fantina Polo” with the date “1329.” Very similar gridded configurations are found in two other maps in this collection, the “Moreta Polo” maps.

In the first “Fantina Polo” map, the place names referred to by Roman numerals run as follows: I. *Canaria* [i.e., one of the Canary Islands]; II. *India* [i.e., “India”]; III. *Tartaria* [i.e., “Tartary”]; IV. *Zipangu* [i.e., the early Italian name for Japan]; V. *Van Scian* [meaning unknown]; VI. *To Qui* [meaning unknown]; VII. *Fusan* [meaning unknown]. This last term, *Fusan*, is apparently the same as similar toponyms in other maps of this collection, with a possible connection to Chinese legend of *Fusang*.

On the right margin of the map there is a text in Italian whose meaning is somewhat ambiguous; a rough rendering in English is:

In the Atlantic Ocean, from the Canaries, off Africa, then in Cōtra, part of Tartary or Serica, finally inside (?) the great land named *Fusan*, is a distance of more than eight hours; when in Europe it is evening, there it is tomorrow.

Fantina Polo
Venice / 1329

In this text and in the numbered key, it appears that at some point in the document’s history *Fusan* was written over to render it as *Focaa*.

The other map, the “Fantina Polo Map 2,” has been given this name since it also bears the name of Fantina Polo; it also has the same date on it (see Fig. 6). This document is a map depicting East Asia, a strait, and a peninsula with a chain of islands; the drawing is set in an oval frame. A series of Roman numerals refers to a set of toponyms. The toponyms below the map are very similar to those found on the first Fantina Polo map, just described: I/ *Tartaria* ó *Serica* [i.e., “Tartary or Serica”]; II / *Zipangu*, III / *Van Scian*, IV / *To Qui*, V / *Ta Can* [meaning unknown; note that this toponym does not appear on the first “Fantina Polo” map]; VI / *Fusan*, VII / *Maro Oriente* [i.e., “Eastern Sea”].
Figure 6. Document 7 ("Fantina Polo Map 2"), recto
Just below the map, there is text in Italian that we may roughly render as follows:

...a city is in Tartary, surrounded by walls of stone... the Eastern Sea of islands, with two long peninsulas between which flow waters... up to a great peninsula which the Tartar sailors call Ta Can; the first is named Uan Scian... the chain of islands To Qiú, the next peninsula Ta Can that is joined to Fusan, a bare land. There, there are men are with swords of wood, and every woman... is as beautiful as a Venus.

Fantina Polo
Venice / 1329

This text appears in a slightly different form in Document 9 (= “Lorenzo Polo Chronicle”).

The peculiar place names of Uan Scian, To Qiú, Ta Can, and Fusan may provide a key piece of evidence in deciphering these maps. At first glance, they seem to be nonsense, but in fact are Italianate renderings of Chinese terms. There is an old Chinese legend of a place called Fu Sang (拂桑), a land far across the seas. In the story, a Buddhist monk named Hui Shen (慧深), originally from Afghanistan, is said to have traveled to lands in the most distant east, beyond China. This legend is over a thousand years old, and various writers have claimed or denied that the place discussed in the tale is, in fact, America. In the legend itself, of course, the details are too vague to make any kind of positive identification. What is important here is that this name, Fu Sang, appears in these maps in the Rossi collection, and that it is used to refer to part of the North American continent. This connection to North America, in fact, is repeated in later European interpretations of the Chinese tale.

The story of Hui Shen is found in several Chinese versions dating back to the seventh century. It seems, however, that the story did not reach Europe until the eighteenth century. Therefore, our mysterious mapmaker here either was working after that time, or drew the maps before that time, but based his depictions on the original Chinese texts and other source materials.

We can identify some very clear matches between the odd toponyms on the Rossi maps and texts, and the places mentioned in the story of Hui Shen. We can also find matches with locales discussed in other old Chinese accounts. In the version of the Hui Shen story found in the fourteenth-century Wen xian tong kao (“Comprehensive Studies in Literature”), we encounter a

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26 The story of Hui Shen’s travels appears in the early seventh-century A.D. Liang shu (梁書, “History of the Liang Dynasty”) by Yao Siliu (姚思廉), (54: 808), and in the later seventh-century Nan shi (南史, “History of the Southern Dynasties”), compiled by Li Yanshou (李延寿). The Nan shi was copied and amended by Ma Duantian (馬端臨), in his early fourteenth-century Wen xian tong kao (文獻通考, “Comprehensive Studies in Literature”). This work, in a section entitled Si ji kao (四公記, “Investigation of the Four Frontiers”), recounts Hui Shen’s story. The story also appears in a slightly different form in the Liang si gong ji (梁四公記, “Memoir of the Four Gentlemen of Liang”), a work dating from the late seventh century and ascribed to Zhang Yue (張說). Fu Sang is also discussed in the famous Shan hai jing (山海經, “Classic of Mountains and Seas”), an early Chinese work that describes various wonders of geography and ethnography.
series of increasingly remote locales. First, we read of *Wen Shen* (文身); this term literally means "marked bodies", and may refer to a land inhabited by tattooed peoples, such as the Ainu. The text says that *Wen Shen* is situated to the northeast of Japan, but we are given nothing more specific than that. The text then speaks of a place called *Da Han* (大漢), a term that literally means "Great China". However, apparently this is not the land of China itself, since another Chinese text, the *Liang shu* ("History of the Liang Dynasty"), tells us that *Da Han* is found more than 5,000 miles east of *Wen Shen*, which itself is already beyond Japan. After *Da Han*, the text tells us, is *Fu Sang* (扶桑).

We see a direct correspondence here to the toponyms in the Rossi maps: *Wen Shen* = *Uan Scian*, *Ta Can* = *Da Han*, and *Fusan* = *Fu Sang*. We might also note that the story of Hui Shen says that beyond *Fu Sang* there is a "Kingdom of Women," much as Document 1 (= "Sirdomap Map") has an "Island of Women"; this is a place that also appears in the traditional Polo narrative.27

So, how did these toponyms come to appear on the Rossi maps? The story of Hui Shen and the land of *Fu Sang* apparently did not reach Europe until the eighteenth century. In 1761, the French sinologist Joseph de Guignes, during the course of research on China, discovered and translated the accounts of Hui Shen's voyage.28 There was much debate, however, as to what this land reported in the ancient texts actually was. The cartographer Philippe Buache (1700-1773) put a land labeled *Fousang* on a region of the Pacific Northwest coast of North America on his 1752 map of these regions, the "Carte des terres nouvellement connues au nord de la Mer du Sud tant du Côté de l'Asie que de Côte de l'Amerique..." Buache was working directly from the translation of Joseph de Guignes; the subtitle of this map was: "Avec la route des Chinois en Amerique vers l'an 458 de J.C. tracée sur les connaissance geographiques que Mr. de Guignes a tirees des annales chinoises par Philippe Buache." Antonio Zatta's map, "Nuove scoperte di russi al nord..." which appeared in Venice in 1776, has the label *Fou-sang, Colonia de[i] Cinesi* in roughly the same locale as Buache's work.

In 1761, Joseph de Guignes presented a paper to the French Royal Academy on his findings concerning the account of Hui Shen. This paper was entitled "Recherches sur les navigations des Chinois du côté de l'Amérique, & sur quelques Peuples situés à l'extrémité orientale de l'Asie."29 In this work, he stated his belief that *Fu Sang* referred to Mexico. De Guignes went on to say that the people and places described in the ancient Chinese account were the Indians of Mexico and the regions of the southwestern United States.

It was not until many years later that these assertions were contested. In 1831, Heinrich Julius Klaproth, a German sinologist, attacked de Guignes's view.30 But the debate was not over; Karl Friedrich Neumann, another sinologist, reiterated the original French interpretation, and provided translations of the original Chinese texts. Charles Hippolyte de Paravey, also support-

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ing the idea that Fu Sang referred to the Americas, generated two books on the subject. In the United States, the discussions continued with Hubert Howe Bancroft, who treated the question of Fu Sang in his book, *Native Races of the Pacific States.* Another analysis, by the sinologist Samuel Wells Williams, appeared a short time later in a scholarly journal. However, the best-known work in America concerning this Chinese tale was that of Charles Godfrey Leland. Leland had been a student in Heidelberg, Germany, and there he had heard Neumann speak on the topic of Fu Sang. Leland sought to bring Neumann’s ideas to America, and in 1850, they appeared in *Knickerbocker Magazine.* In 1875, Leland’s treatment of Fu Sang came out in book form, with the publication of *Fusang: or, The Discovery of America by Chinese Buddhist Priests in the Fifth Century.* This book provided Neumann’s recounting of the story of Hui Shen, as well as a discussion of the navigation of the Pacific Ocean, and a look at possible connections between American antiquities and Old World artifacts.

The fact that the toponyms of Ta Han, Fu Sang, and so on, appear on the Rossi maps may mean that these works are, then, from the eighteenth century or after. Alternatively, it could mean that these maps are of a much earlier date, as the dates on them would seem to claim, and are derived directly from the Chinese texts of the story of the travels of Hui Shen. In other words, the mapmaker was reading the Chinese text and taking the toponyms directly from the story and putting them onto his maps, transliterating the terms from the Chinese into Italian romanization.

If the mapmaker made these maps from the later European translations of the Chinese tale of Fusang, then one might expect to find the toponyms put in the French romanization used by De Guignes, for example Ven-chin and Ta-han. But instead, we find that the toponyms seem to have been rendered from the Chinese directly into an Italian transliteration: Uan Scian and Ta Can. For example, in English, the Chinese character 天 is rendered wen, whereas it Italian, it would be rendered ven, since there is no “w” in that language. Similarly, the character 天 is rendered shen in English; De Guignes renders it as chin in French. In Italian, it would be scian, to render this same soft “sh” sound — “ch” before “i” in Italian has a hard “k” sound, where “c” before “i” has a soft sound like the English “child”. De Guignes transliterates 大漢 as Ta-han, whereas the Rossi maps have Ta Can; the use of can to render 天 may indicate an Italian dialectal artifact, where “c” is used to yield an “h” sound. The character 天 is romanized in English as han. The evidence here, then, seems to indicate that the Chinese terms were directly transliterated into Italian, and perhaps into the Venetian dialect in particular.

**The Question of Authenticity**

This is an odd collection indeed. Were these documents created in the eighteenth or nineteenth century in an attempt at the fabrication of cartographic curiosities? At this point, this is an open question, at least until proper testing of inks and parchments can be carried out. Complete paleographic tests must also be done, although certainly the handwriting on a num-

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ber of the documents seems late. It could be that these are later copies of earlier works that are genuinely connected to the family of Marco Polo.

One can only speculate at this point, but there are a number of questions we can formulate. If these documents do have such genuine origins, then there might be some other references to them in the historical record. If the documents in this collection were pure fabrications, we would have to ask: Who put together such an elaborate series of works, with all the complex connections between the different pieces? What was the motivation? In the case of the Vinland Map, possible motives for forgery might have been political or financial, but here the case would be rather more obscure.

We are given a few clues by the documents themselves. Document 7 (= “Fantina Polo Map 2”) has a small, oval-shaped tab attached to it at the bottom; the name on that tab reads diana bonacolsin da Verona. The last name was a dialectical variation of the Italian name Bonacolsi. This was a famous Italian family that controlled several northern cities, including Mantua and Modena in the early thirteenth century. Document 1 (= “Sirdomap Map”) also has one of these attached, oval-shaped tabs, on the verso. On this tab, we find a different name: Marta Veniero da Padova. The “Moreta Polo Map 1” has a tab with the same name. The name Venier is a Venetian form of the name Venerio. So, we have a Venetian connection — indeed, Venerio was the last name of one of Venice’s noble families. At this point, we can only speculate, but it is interesting that the maps in the Rossi collection possess what seem to be tags of ownership. Bagrow believes that this Marta Veniero was the recipient of the map, sent by Moreta Polo, but this interpretation must also be seen as highly speculative.

On the verso of the “Fantina Polo Map 2” are the words Tabula Geographica Fascio 96. Folio 254, while on the verso of the “Fantina Polo Map 1” we read: Tabula Geographica Fascio 96. Folio 255. Finally, the verso of the “Moreta Polo Map 1” has Tabula Geographica Fascio 96. Folio 256. These may be clues as to the chain of ownership of these strange and intriguing documents, and indicate one of the potential directions for future research. From the terms used, it seems as if these documents were part of a collection at some point.

The daughters of Marco Polo play a key role in the mystery of these maps and texts, since their names — Bellela Polo, Moreta Polo, and Fantina Polo — are found on a number of the documents. What do we know about these women, and what do historical sources tell us about any connection between them and the voyages of their father? A reading of the maps implies that the daughters were recording or preserving information about Asia brought back by their father, Marco Polo. But there are many questions brought up by this scenario. Nothing in the surviving manuscripts of the Polo narrative, Il Milione, indicates that Marco Polo transmitted or left behind detailed information about his journey to his daughters. Ramusio, who wrote a somewhat confusing summary of the Polo family, also does not mention any such activity.

Despite the fact that these documents show such a close connection between the three daughters and Marco Polo’s voyage, nothing in the surviving narrative, Il Milione, discusses this. Furthermore, while Marco Polo’s will names all his daughters, it does not explicitly mention any maps. We do know that Bellela married a man named Bertucco Quirini, while her sister Moreta was married twice — once to Ranuzzo Dolfin, and later to Tomaso Gradonico. Fantina was married to Marco Bragadin. We have some record of descendants from Fantina

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35 Bagrow, 6.
and her husband. One might seek to surmise that the maps began their centuries-long journey to the present owners by way of these families. But there seems no way of checking this.

The famous Vinland Map in some ways set the stage for a certain kind of cartographic controversy about authenticity. Some still hold that the Vinland Map is what it purports to be. In the case of this collection of "Marco Polo" maps, we must proceed with caution, since there are so many questions raised by these documents. In the case of the Vinland Map, there is just one document. Moreover, motives for a possible forgery are quite clear: to provide cartographic "evidence" of Viking explorations of the New World. In the case of these "Marco Polo" documents, the motivations of a possible forger are less clear. To prove that Marco Polo ventured towards the New World? To indicate Chinese or Arab involvement in voyages to the New World?

Perhaps the documents, if fabrications, were made for financial gain, but we have no indication that Marcian F. Rossi wanted to sell them to the Library of Congress — rather, he simply seems to have been interested in finding out more about them. Moreover, if these documents are fabrications, when were they created and by whom? And why are there so many? There are some fourteen documents in all, with both figures and text; the documents include passages in Italian, Latin, Chinese, and Arabic. The content of each document connects in some way to the other documents, revealing a fairly complex narrative. A forger would have had to have been quite knowledgeable — and dedicated — to create such a large body of work.

It is also interesting to note that the Sanseverino's, the della Rovere clan, and to a lesser extent the Rossi family, were all members of the Italian nobility and related by marriage to each other and to other noble families in Europe. This in and of itself does not prove anything, but it may offer some explanation as to how and why such important documents could have been preserved and passed down over a period of several hundred years.

**Directions for Further Research**

Certainly, the handwriting on several of the documents suggests later dates than those included in the text of the materials themselves; a full paleographic study is required. This could mean that the documents as they stand now are fabrications, or modernized copies of documents that really do date back to the time of Marco Polo's daughters, i.e., the fourteenth century. It is also could be that the true nature of this collection reflects some kind of combination of these two possibilities. Bagrow, in his preliminary investigation of the documents, felt that

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37 Seth Jercнов的 the University of Pennsylvania, in a personal communication (11 February 2006), pointed out some "modern" aspects of the writing on some of the documents. His preliminary paleographic analysis suggests that none of the documents are earlier than the eighteenth century, although they could be copies of earlier works. He also feels that the works are likely not later than the eighteenth century.
the documents were "more or less late modernized copies," and added that the "copyists have not endeavored to conceal the time at which the copies were made. In their script there is no effort to imitate the characteristic oldness of each original..." This may be the case, but the collection may actually present a more complex scenario, one which will be elucidated only with further investigation. We would have to answer the question as to who these "copyists" were, what the original materials might have looked like, when the copying took place, and so on.

If we posit the idea that these documents were simply fabricated and are not what they purport to be, then we have the question of who made them. As pointed out earlier, the documents are not simple creations — they involve multiple languages, personages, images, and so on. There are also many particulars in the documents, particulars that would have required extensive cartographic knowledge on the part of the fabricator. These particulars include the mention of the famed mythical island of Antilia, the Ptolemaic nature of some of the toponyms, and the presence of Arabic and Chinese writing on some of the documents.

Of course, we should ask whether there ever existed any maps at all that directly derived from Marco Polo's voyages. Giovanni Battista Ramusio's 1558 Navigationi et Viaggi speaks of a map brought back from Cathay by Marco Polo, but provides few details as to what this map looked like. Another clue comes from Giacinto Placido Zurla, a learned Cardinal Vicar of Rome, born in 1769. Zurla was a theologian and historian, particularly interested in the history of cartography. In 1806, he published a study of the fifteenth-century Italian mapmaker, Fra Mauro. Later, he wrote a two-volume work entitled Di Marco Polo e degli altri viaggiatori veneziani. Soon after that, a shorter cartographical study by Zurla was published in Venice, entitled Sulle antiche mappe idro-geografiche lavorate in Venezia.

Part of that latter work examined a map of the voyages of Marco Polo in the Palazzo Ducale (known as the "Dogè's Palace" in English) in Venice. This is an Italian palace in the Gothic style that was built in various stages from the fourteenth to early fifteenth century. This was the residence of the "Dogè" — i.e., Duke — and contained his offices and those of other officials. In the palace, there is a map room, the Sala dello Scudo. There, one finds a large world map, oriented with south at the top. What Zurla says concerning this map is quite interesting. First he describes the map, and all the regions it shows; he then notes that parts of the map's depictions are like the descriptions found in Ramusio.

More importantly, Zurla examines the portion of the map that shows North America. He argues that the northwestern portion of the continent was there on an earlier map — a map that served as the source for this one. He comments that "this primitive indication of a large island or continent in the old maps is most interesting." Zurla goes on to imply that Marco Polo somehow had knowledge of these regions, including the strait between Asia and America, cinque secoli — five centuries — before the voyages of Bering and others.

38 Bagrow, 12.
42 See Zurla, Sulle antiche mappe idro-geografiche lavorate in Venezia, 84-85.
43 Ibid., 88.
But again, as far as we know, “Marco Polo drew… no maps recording his experience…”\textsuperscript{44} Maps such as the 1375 Catalan Atlas use information from the Polo narrative in the depiction of Asia, but there is no suggestion that the work was based on any maps that Marco Polo or his fellow travelers might have brought back. Fra Mauro’s 1459 world map also uses Marco Polo’s toponyms, and later Ramusio claimed that this work was a copy of one brought back from China by Marco Polo. However, there is no evidence provided for this claim.

If we are to speculate that the Rossi maps are pure fabrications, then we must seek possible suspects. One can only put forward some names, but there is little in the way of evidence. A scholar has recently suggested that the Vinland Map was created by the Jesuit cartographer Father Josef Fischer (1858 - 1944), with motives that were political.\textsuperscript{45} It would be interesting to speculate that Fischer was also responsible for the Rossi maps, but there seems no apparent connection. For the Rossi maps, it might be that the sinologist Joseph de Guignes was responsible, but why would he have created maps that suggest distant travels beyond China by Marco Polo? Guignes’ fixation was on proving that the Chinese had come to the shores of America in ancient times. It is interesting to note that even earlier, the Portuguese writer António Galvão in his 1563 work, \textit{Tratado dos Descobrimentos}, had claimed that the Chinese had reached the New World, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{46} But there seems no direct connection between Galvão’s work and the maps in this collection.

Since the text in the Rossi documents is primarily in Italian, it might be suggested that an Italian sinologist was responsible. We have Father Martino Martini (1614 - 1661), a Jesuit missionary to the Chinese in the seventeenth century, who worked in the areas of theology, history, and cartography. He produced the extensive \textit{Novus Atlas Sinensis}, a series of maps of all of China. There is, too, the other famous missionary, Father Matteo Ricci (1552 - 1610), who also worked extensively in the area of cartography while in China. But we can only speculate; there is certainly no account of an Italian sinologist fabricating maps of this kind.

There is also the rather extensive literature concerning the mythical “Straits of Anian” that could provide a clue, since these Rossi documents suggest that Marco Polo voyaged to the ends of Asia, across a strait filled with a chain islands, to mainland beyond.\textsuperscript{47} Concerning such a navigable passage, there are certainly well-known fakes and frauds in the historical record. Lorenzo Ferrer-Maldonado, a sixteenth-century Spanish navigator, wrote a work entitled \textit{Relación del Descubrimiento del Estrecho de Anian en 1588}, describing a voyage that was likely fanciful. The French geographer, Philippe Buache, obtained a copy of this work, and put a strait between Asia and North America — along with \textit{Fousang} as a region on the Pacific Northwest coast of North America — on his maps, as discussed earlier.


But perhaps it is premature to discuss such matters. First, full paleographic and chemical tests of the Rossi documents should be carried out. Then there can be further background studies of the Polo family, the Rossi family tree, the Sanseverino clan, and the various individuals mentioned in these documents. Other research should include an examination of the relationship between *Il Milione* and early cartography, a search for possible clues in the various manuscripts versions of the Polo narrative, and a full analysis of the history of the "Anian" concept.48

In short, we can speculate that the documents described here are exactly what they purport to be, perhaps with later annotations, overwrites, and so on. The brief paleographic analysis already carried out suggests that the Rossi maps and texts discussed here are copies or interpretations drawn from unknown source documents. However, additional research and analysis needs to be done to support a more definitive conclusion. Finally, whether fabrications or copies of some kind, these documents nevertheless are of historical significance because they suggest that information of a certain kind was available to the author of these documents — information that is inconsistent with prevailing views of the history of cartography and the evolution of geographic knowledge. The Rossi documents, an intriguing collection for historians, hold a great deal of potential for further investigation.

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48 Another area for investigation concerns early ideas on the connection between Asia and northwestern North America. An example of a work in this area is José Torrubia, *I moscoviti nella Càlibria, o sia, Dimostrazione della verità del passo all'America Setentrionale nuovamente scoperto dai russi, e di quello anticamente praticato dalli popolatori, che vi trasmigraron dall'Asia: dissertazione storico-geografica* (Rome: Generoso Salomoni, 1759). In this book, Torrubia argued that the Native Americans had migrated to North America from Asia, a theme directly connected to the discussions in some of the Rossi documents.