



## Fra' Mauro's World Map: A History

By Piero Falchetta. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. [Rimini-Bologna:] Imago, [2013]. [No ISBN]. Pp. 121, illus. Euro €25.00. [Imago SRL, C. so Giovanni XXIII, NR. 9, 47921 Rimini, Italy.]

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the apostolic places mentioned in the *Commentary*. Similarities with other world maps are traced back to a late Roman world map. A change in the text hitherto overlooked is now explained; the words *subiecta formula picturarum demonstrat* in the older versions are here interpreted as an allusion to the portraits of the apostles (not to all the images on the map), while the 940 version *subiectae formulae pictura demonstrat* refers to nothing else but the map itself that at the same time was given a rectangular outline, a Paradise containing Adam and Eve, and the striking prominence of Jerusalem.

Finally, family IIb of the Beatus maps entirely lost their link with the *Commentary*; the apostles disappeared as the geographical features became more complex. It is less surprising that in their styling the maps reflected artistic evolution in Iberian territories from Pre-Romanesque to Gothic style, with an increasing tendency towards more detailed and decorative embellishment and a shift from short texts to a greater number of images on the maps. However, the author's suggestion that it would have been easier to introduce new theological thoughts or perspectives through the illustrations than in texts is less convincing, even if today the visualization, too, allows us to draw conclusions about authors, the region and the date of individual maps.

Overall, this erudite and source-oriented study, which is characterized by an extraordinary attention to detail, shows how the interpretation of maps within their textual transmission can reinforce our understanding of the cultural context of the manuscripts. Particularly convincing is the contextualization of the maps' formal analysis. The Annexes, giving geographical references to places on the maps, notes, a bibliography and an index will all serve the reader well as helpful points of orientation.

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*Fra' Mauro's World Map: A History.* By Piero Falchetta. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. [Rimini-Bologna:] Imago, [2013]. [No ISBN]. Pp. 121, illus. Euro €25.00. [Imago SRL, C. so Giovanni XXIII, NR. 9, 47921 Rimini, Italy.]

This is a succinct and readable account of an important map, often seen as bridging a gap between medieval and early-modern cartography. It brings together and carries forward much earlier work by Piero Falchetta, who is a librarian at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, the map's home, and while published to accompany the facsimile produced by Imago of the map with its frame, the book stands independently as a valuable introduction and guide for both the specialist and the general reader. Throughout there is close reference to the map itself, with many quotations (with translations) of its inscriptions and of other relevant records.

The map is of impressive size, drawn in a circle nearly 2 metres in diameter and containing almost 3,000 inscriptions, besides others no longer legible. We know little of how it was made or, indeed, of the life and personality of its author beyond what we can learn from the map itself.

We know, however, that Fra Mauro was a monk at San Michele monastery on the island of Murano outside Venice; he was still living in April 1459, when a payment was made to him, but he must have died by October, when the prior of another Venetian monastery took charge of a chest containing his writings and drawings, his preliminary work for the map; these were never heard of again. A note on the map's contemporary frame records that the work, presumably map and frame, was completed on 26 August 1460.

Falchetta explores carefully and thoroughly the most difficult question posed by surviving records: did Fra Mauro produce one map or two? In 1457 the Portuguese crown paid the prior of San Michele substantial sums towards Fra Mauro's expenses in the work on his world map, and it has been assumed that besides the map now in Venice he made another, sent to Lisbon, that vanished leaving no trace in other records. Falchetta suggests that in fact only one map was made and that it was duly sent to Lisbon. There, however, it was rejected and returned to Venice, perhaps because its image of Africa took no account of recent Portuguese discoveries, perhaps because its inscriptions were in Venetian Italian instead of in the Latin that would be as well understood in Lisbon as in Venice—but also, perhaps, because it contained obvious errors introduced by other cartographers who completed the map after Fra Mauro had died or had become too ill to finish it himself. This explanation may seem a little far-fetched, but it accords with what we know, including the evidence of the rest of the map that Fra Mauro was a skilled and accurate cartographer. However, it is fair to say, as Falchetta allows, that we have no proof that the map we have ever went to Lisbon.

Falchetta is rightly anxious to maintain Fra Mauro's reputation. The principal mistakes on the map, which would have been seen as mistakes in Fra Mauro's day, are on the Persian Gulf where names from its western shore appear on its east side and, more fundamentally, in south Asia, where the Indus River takes the course of the Ganges to reach the sea while the Ganges seems in part confused with the Yangtze; the area between the Indus and the Ganges has been moved to southeast Asia. For the rest, as Falchetta shows, the map accurately displays information drawn from a great variety of sources. Among them are the maps from Ptolemy's *Geography*, the accounts of the East by Marco Polo and Nicolò de' Conti, maps of eastern Africa drawn by clergy of the Ethiopian church who were perhaps delegates to the Council of Florence in 1439–1443 and, as Fra Mauro notes on the map itself, what he had been told by travellers.

The map differs from its medieval predecessors in its purely secular content. There is a picture of the earthly Paradise with a note of the four rivers that flow from it, but this is outside the circle of the map itself. However, while Fra Mauro's assessment and interpretation of his great range of sources look forward to the cartography of a later age, Falchetta insists that he had the same aim as the authors of earlier world maps, to represent the entire world as a single image, and he sees it as significant that at San Michele the map was so placed that it must have been impossible to examine its inscriptions and the details of its

outlines. We see it still as a bridge between medieval and early modern, a bridge firmly fixed on both sides of whatever gap there may have been.

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*The Vesconte-Maggiolo World Map of 1504 in Fano, Italy.* By Gregory C. McIntosh. Long Beach, CA, Plus Ultra Publishing Co., 2013. ISBN 978-0-96-674623-5. Pp. vi., 94, illus. US \$30.00 (cloth).

Gregory C. McIntosh's *The Vesconte-Maggiolo World Map of 1504 in Fano, Italy*, is a painstaking analysis of place-names and general design from a small group of early sixteenth-century world maps, the earliest to show the New World and the results of Portuguese voyages around Africa to Asia. He attempts to construct a stemma demonstrating how these maps are related to one another. His thesis is that the original is the Portuguese government Padrão map, a copy of which was smuggled out of Lisbon in 1502 by Alberto Cantino for his employer the Duke of Ferrara. Passing through Genoa, this map then became the basis for the King-Hamy (1502–1503), Caverio (1503), Maggiolo (1504) and Kunstmann II (1504–1505) maps. More distant descendants include Waldseemüller's world maps of 1507 and 1516. It should be pointed out at the outset that no two of these maps are identical. While the overall structure is similar, details vary.

The maps are put together from two different depictions of the two halves of the world. The New World on the Fano map takes the form McIntosh describes as the 'King' or King-Hamy model, showing Greenland (Tera de Lavrador), Newfoundland (Tera de Corte Real), the Caribbean (Tera de Colombo vocatur Antiga) and Tera de Consalvo Coigo vocatur Sana Croxe (Brazil). McIntosh also uses the rather archaic classification 'Lusitano-Germanic' maps for the Cantino and Caverio planispheres (a term originally coined by Henry Harisse) without explaining clearly how this model differs from the King model and why.

For the Old World Henricus Martellus Germanus's maps had already modified Ptolemy's picture, eliminating the land bridge between Africa and Asia, a feature of the maps studied here. The King model goes further, with an extended triangular peninsula for India and a more accurate depiction of the Malay peninsula. Other developments are a smaller Sri Lanka located southeast of India, Sumatra on the west coast of Malaya, and the absence of a myriad of islands off East Asia. The changes to the Old World, says McIntosh, were based on information from Pedro Álvarez Cabral, who returned from India in July 1501, as well as from other contemporary Portuguese explorers and the geographical knowledge they obtained from Arab pilots in the Indian Ocean. This new image was recorded on the Portuguese Padrão map, which was the foundation for the maps under discussion here.

Vesconte Maggiolo, the founder of a family of map-makers who worked in Genoa for almost two hundred years, thoughtfully signed and dated his Fano map, thus providing a solid rock in the shifting sands of early map identification. McIntosh examines every possible sequence of descent among the seven maps mentioned

below, using primarily toponyms (their order, spelling and misspelling), littoral outlines and cartographic design. Examples of the last include the rectangular form of the Persian Gulf (originally Ptolemaic) and the horizontal (east–west) design of the Red Sea. Appendices to the book include lists of more than 8,000 place-names from West Africa to Brazil as shown on seven different maps. The author would be the first to admit that many problems remain, although he is confident that the primary source was a single Portuguese Padrão map from 1502, modified by each mapmaker from a variety of other sources.

The book is illustrated with two maps, Fano and Caverio, as well as the compass rose in central Africa, which contains another world map, found on these two maps only. The Fano reproduction is dark and small, the Caverio clearer but also small. Since the originals were quite large, the place-names on the reproductions cannot be read, and other significant maps are not illustrated. The reader must search the internet, where the Huntington Library has posted an excellent image of the King-Hamy map. Others can be seen online, although not all in searchable formats.

On the whole this is a difficult book with which to work. It lacks an index and table of contents, and writing this review required a lot of shuffling back and forth through the pages. McIntosh's main idea was to apply the methods of textual criticism to early maps. Place-names are the primary texts, but in the case of maps the process is complicated by the visual shapes. Here he has introduced the concept of 'design-types'. Since these forms are copied and re-copied on subsequent maps, one can use them to track their parentage and descent. Only a true portolan-chart fanatic will enjoy this book, but such a person will enjoy it very much and find it a wonderful resource and suggestive of further research.

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*Cartographie et représentations de l'Orient méditerranéen en Occident (du milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle).* By Emmanuelle Vagnon. Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols, 2013. ISBN: 978-2-503-54896-8. Pp. 453, illus. Euro € 100.00.

Emmanuelle Vagnon's *Cartographie et représentations de l'Orient méditerranéen en Occident (du milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)* explores maps created by Europeans in the high and late Middle Ages, especially those that focus on the Middle East or that have representations of the Middle East as a significant element in their composition. Her work provides much original research on the development of several types of maps in the period under review, particularly in relation to the dossier of Crusader maps attributed to Pietro Vesconte and the pilgrimage maps of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Vagnon's book reflects a shift of focus on to the Middle East, perhaps largely in response to contemporary events in the region, and charts the rise and dominance of Islam,