
The Early Cartography of Japan

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honoured by the presence of His Royal Highness the Duke of York this evening; and we are gratified at the message from our Vice-Patron, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, delivered by his Excellency the Portuguese Minister, expressing approbation of our proceedings, and pleasure that his son is associated with them. We rejoice, also, that the proceedings to-night have been gratifying to His Excellency, and we trust they will be equally so to His Faithful Majesty and the Portuguese nation. For ourselves I trust they will serve to impress the leading facts of Prince Henry's life more firmly on our minds, and encourage us, as geographers, always to remember his motto, "Talant de bien faire."

THE EARLY CARTOGRAPHY OF JAPAN.

By GEORGE COLLINGRIDGE.

In the year 1542 Japan was accidentally discovered by Antonio de Mota, a Portuguese sailor, who, being driven out of his course, was the first European to sight its shores. A few years later St. Francis Xavier founded a mission there, to which we owe the first information that we have concerning Japan and the Japanese. As far as I have been able to ascertain, twenty-seven years elapsed after this fortuitous discovery before we find on maps any apparent result of the knowledge of the country thus acquired by Europeans.

Portolanos were made, no doubt, and in 1569 appeared Gerard Mercator's invaluable map of the world. On this map an island is set down in the locality of the southern half of Japan, with the legend "*JAPAN dicta Zipangri a MPaulo Veneto, olim Chrise.*"* The configurations of this island, when compared with a modern map of Japan, will be seen to include the south-western peninsula of Nippon and the two southern islands, Kiusiu and Sikok. What is called the "Inland Sea," between the inland shores of the above-named islands, appears therefore to have been unknown to Mercator, who makes one island of the three.

Mercator's charting of Japan is probably the first ever made on a world map by European cartographers; for, as I hope to be able to show, the "Zipangri" referred to in Mercator's inscription, Marco Polo's Zipangu, Toscanelli's and Christopher Columbus' Cipango, have nothing to do whatsoever with Japan.

The name "Cipango" has been written in many different ways, and its similitude to Japan, Ji-pen-koué, Ge-pen, Jih-pun, etc., has been commented upon at great length by able authors, who, however, would have

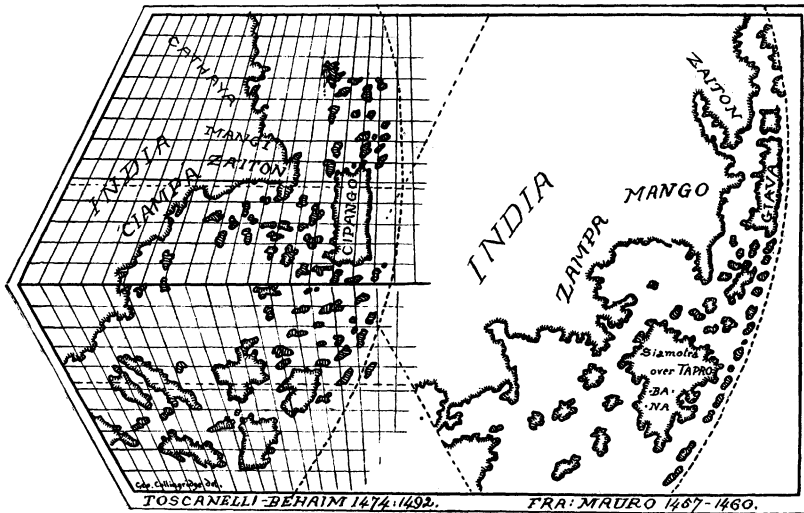
* I am quoting from Jomard's copy. Nordenskiöld says (Nordenskiöld's Fac-simile Atlas, pages 96, 132, 2nd col.), "It is reproduced in full size, but without some of the important legends."

been wiser had they inquired first on what foundation they were building. When a close inquiry is made into the subject, the only apparent reason for believing that Cipango was Japan consists in the fact that when that island was discovered, another island of the name of Cipango was found to occupy, *on maps*, its approximate position, and that Marco Polo had said that "Zipangu" was an island in the Eastern Ocean. Now, if the Eastern Ocean of Marco Polo can be shown to be the Java Sea, and Cipango to be an island of the Eastern Archipelago, the whole fabric of Ji-pen-Koué construction will fall to the ground. The method I followed to ascertain the truth in this matter is simple enough. I searched on old maps for the origin of the charting of Cipango, and I read up Marco Polo's descriptions carefully.

There has always been a wonderful amount of conservatism with geographers; fortunately, they are not prone to invent when they can possibly avoid it. Toscanelli and Martin Behaim were the first geographers of the Renaissance to place Cipango on the spherical representation of the earth; but they copied, I was going to say traced, their Cipango from Fra Mauro's map. Fra Mauro's celebrated Mappamundi, itself based on older maps the origin of which can be traced to the very dawn of geography, was the most important and complete document that Toscanelli and Behaim could have recourse to for information, and although it belonged to a type of maps then on the eve of reformation, its configurations, apparently, were not to be despised. The Toscanelli map in which Cipango appears is now lost, but it was described so minutely by Toscanelli in his letter to the court of Portugal in 1474, and also in the letter he sent afterwards to Columbus, that we know it to be similar to Behaim's unique globe of 1492. Behaim's Cipango (Cipanga in Jomard's copy) is, as I have said, almost a tracing of Fra Mauro's large island similarly situated in the Eastern Ocean; but Fra Mauro's island bears the name of *Giava*. It is, in fact, Java, and not Japan, as a comparison of the two will show at once. This changing of Fra Mauro's *Giava* into Cipango prevented the identification of Java, and caused the mistake to be ignored to this day. Toscanelli then proceeded, in order to make use of the name stolen from the proper Java, to apply it to a large island south of the equator. It would be difficult to find out the exact reason that urged Toscanelli to convert Fra Mauro's *Giava* into Cipango; several reasons may be suggested, to which I shall refer by-and-by.

Those islands of the East Indian Archipelago, Java, Bali, Lombok, and Sumbawa, as represented on Fra Mauro's Mappamundi, must have been drawn from a portolano, for they bear, especially Java, the characteristic correct features of those documents; but Toscanelli, totally ignorant, no doubt, if the true form of Java, took no heed of its correct features as represented on Fra Mauro's map. He apparently ignored, also, the circumstances that compelled Fra Mauro to place his *Giava* and

other islands south and north, instead of west and east as they should be; otherwise, when he stretched out the world on its spherical projection, having more room for those islands, he would have placed Java and its eastern prolongation of islands in their true west and east position, south of the equator, had he known them to be truly represented as to form and topographical contiguity. One of his reasons, therefore, for changing the name of Giava to Cipango must have been derived from the importance he attached to Marco Polo's descriptions. The importance that the Venetian traveller himself gave in those descriptions to Cipango must also have caused him to increase the dimensions of that island. Another reason was no doubt suggested to Toscanelli by the easterly position occupied by Fra Mauro's Giava, which answered to



Marco Polo's Eastern Ocean. He evidently thought that that island had been misnamed, and, in consequence, he transferred Fra Mauro's nomenclature to the south of the line, giving it to the large island bearing the name *Siamotra over Taprobana* and TAPROBANA in large capitals.

We must now see what Marco Polo's evidence is in the matter; but before doing so, it may be well to offer some explanation for Fra Mauro's strange mistake in placing Java north of the equator, and in the approximate latitude of Japan. The circumstances that compelled him, as I have said, were of a twofold character—tradition and want of space. Before the construction of globes and the revival of graduated maps, all maps of the world of any importance were represented within a circle formed by the circumfluent ocean. In maps of the world of this description, Java and other islands of the Eastern Archipelago are represented in the Eastern Ocean. The following are some of the maps:

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The St. Sever Mappemonde, of the eleventh century ; a map of the twelfth century, from a manuscript in the library of Turin ; Marino Sanudo's map of the world, from the beginning of the fourteenth century ; Andre Bianco's map of the world of 1436, etc. Precedent, therefore, commanded Fra Mauro to place Java and other islands in the East. Owing to the peculiar shape of his map, and the absence of graduation, he was compelled to place the Indian Archipelago south and north, instead of west and east ; furthermore, having no graduation to guide him, he did perceive that he placed those islands north of the equator ; nor is it certain that the equator, or the position of the East Indian Archipelago with respect to it, troubled him much, although he put on record a protest against the want of space. This protest his followers availed themselves of, but not in the right direction. The want of space was noticed by Fra Mauro precisely in the Eastern Ocean, for he says, *In questo mar oriental sono molte isole grande e famose che non ho posto per non aver luogo.* The large and famous islands that he did not set down for want of space were, no doubt, Borneo, Celebes, and the Philippine group.

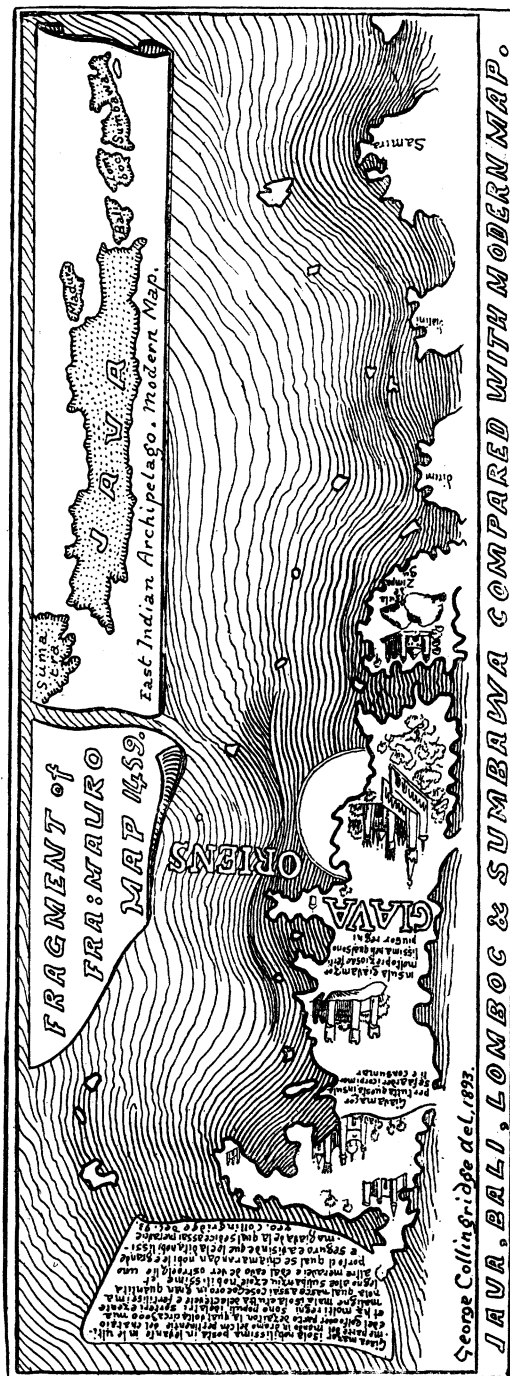
Marco Polo, writing from hearsay, describes, in my opinion, Java, and perhaps other islands contiguous to Java, under the name of Zipangu. The other islands may have comprised the whole group of the East Indian Archipelago as far as Sumbawa, Zipangu being the early form of Sumbawa. Zipangu, to use a common expression, was the peg on which hung the tale of a kind of reflex-Java, for Marco Polo describes the real Java in another part of his book. Zipangu is described in the second, third, and fourth chapters of his Third Book. In the second chapter Marco Polo says that the island of Zipangu is in the Eastern Ocean, at the distance of about 1500 miles from China. As he gives precisely the same distance to Java, it will be noticed that there may be some confusion here, and that the distance refers to the East Indian Archipelago ; for Japan is much nearer to the coast of China, the distance being 500 miles, whereas 100 miles barely separate Japan from the continent at Korea.

The next item of importance is the description of the "extraordinary richness of the sovereign's palace," and the general wealth of the island in gold, silver, and precious stones. These descriptions may be considered as partly fabulous, but, however, have always referred to Java. Ptolemy's Jabadiœ, or Sabadibe, identical with the Sanscrit Jawa Dwipa, which is now known beyond doubt to refer to Java, is, both in Ptolemy's descriptions and in the Hindu poem Râmâjana, described as abounding in gold and silver. Odoric of Pordenone gives a description of the king's palace in Java, almost in Polo's words, when speaking of Cipango. Marco Polo then describes various customs, and gives a graphic account of a military expedition sent against Cipango by the great Khan Kublaï.

All the customs referred to are applicable to Java, especially the burning of the dead, practised to this day. The great Khan Kublaï

may have sent military expeditions to Japan. We know for certain that he sent several to Java, and the one described by Marco Polo bears many signs of having been sent to Java or some island of the Eastern Archipelago. The date coincides approximately with one of the expeditions sent to Java. But a stronger reason for believing that it was sent against the Javanese is given by the reference made to "the efficacy of a diabolical charm, consisting of a jewel or amulet introduced into the right arm between the skin and the flesh," and according to which combatants "were rendered secure from the effects of iron, either to kill or wound." We have here an essentially Javanese belief, which is common also to several islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Nicolo de' Conti describes it thus: * "Et nell' isola maggior di Giaua dice hauer inteso che vi nasce vn' arbore, ma di rado, in mezzo del quale si trova vna verga di ferro motto sottile,

* Ramusio, 'Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi,' fol. 344 F., date 1563.



et di lungezza quanto é il tronco dell' arbore, vn pezzo del qual ferro é di tanta virtù, che chi lo porta adosso che gli tocchi la carne, non può esser ferito d' altro ferro, & per questo molti di loro s'aprono la carne, & se lo cuciano tra pelle & pelle, & ne fanno grande stima." "The island of Java, called *Major*, produces a tree of great rarity, in the middle of which there is found an iron rod, very thin, and as long as the trunk of a tree. He who carries about him a small piece of this iron rod, so that it may touch his flesh, is invulnerable by iron, and for this reason many persons open their skin and insert it in their bodies. This is esteemed of the highest importance by them." *

The third chapter bears the title "Of the Nature of the Idols worshipped in Zipangu, and of the People being addicted to Eating Human Flesh." It is hardly necessary to refer here to the Hindu figures representing deities, or idols, as they were called. The ruins of Singha Sari and other antiquities of Java, with their Hindu mythological figures, have been well described by some few authors. In Raffles' 'Java,' all the figures erroneously attributed to Japan may be seen, from the Brahman bull, the human figures with elephants' and other animals' heads, to the figures of Hindoo deities, each double-headed, three-headed, or four-headed, and with several pairs of arms.

It was, no doubt, to the worship of these idols that the inhumanity, supposed or otherwise, of the people of Java was attributed. Nicolò de' Conti ('India in the Fifteenth Century,' p. 16), describing the inhabitants of Java, says, "The inhabitants of these islands are more inhuman and cruel than any other nation. . . . They exceed every other people in cruelty . . ." Zudovico Barthema, writing about sixty years later in 1503, is less sparing in his appreciation of the Javanese. He consecrates chapter xxviii. of his book of travels to "theyr cruell maners in selling their parentes to the Anthropophagi to be eaten." †

In the fourth chapter Marco Polo describes the "Sea of Chin," between Zipangu and China. This chapter is conclusive; it is impossible to make out that it treats of any other locality except Java and its eastern prolongation of islands. In all contemporaneous writings and maps the "Sea of Chin," or Chinese Sea, extends from Java and the Spice Islands to the shores of China. This is the sea in which the Chinese junks performed, and perform to this day, their annual navigations, sailing along the coasts of Anam, and thence to Singapore, Sumatra, and Java, etc., and returning with their freights when the favourable monsoon set in. It is curious that Marsden, in his edition of Marco Polo, did not notice what discrepancy there was in assuming Cipango to be Japan, when in his own words, commenting on the homeward-bound voyages of the Chinese junks, he says, "Such also at the present day is the

* The travels of Nicolò Conti, in 'India in the Fifteenth Century,' edited by R. H. Major, for the Hakluyt Society, p. 32, anno 1857.

† 'Voyages of Vertomannus,' A.D. 1503 (Richard Eden), p. 232. Aungervyle Society's edit., 1884.

state of navigation amongst the Chinese, whose junks are employed in trading to Java (*sic*) and other islands of the Archipelago, but, not being adapted either by their construction or mood of rigging to work against a contrary wind, require two monsoons for the performance of their outward and homeward-bound voyages. The account here given of these periodical winds is substantially correct. In the China seas the north-east or winter monsoon, being that which is favourable for sailing from the southern ports of China to the Straits of Malacca or Java, commences about the month of October or November, and lasts till about February or March; the south-west monsoon sets in about April or May, and blows till August or September, during which latter season the junks return homewards."

In conclusion, one small item requires elucidation; the name "Cipango" does not appear to bear much resemblance to Sumbawa. But both names, the one derived from the literature of Marco Polo, and the other derived from the cartography of Sumbawa, have at least a dozen different orthographies, and Cipango and Sumbawa are perhaps the most opposite. If we make a more homogeneous choice, we shall find Zimpagua instead of Cipango, and Zimpagu instead of Sumbawa, the latter name being the one given to Bali in close proximity to Java in Fra Mauro's Mappamundi.

BARON TOLL'S EXPEDITION TO ARCTIC SIBERIA AND THE NEW SIBERIA ISLANDS.

At the meeting, January 24, of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, Baron Toll read a report on his interesting expedition.

In 1889 the Academy had received from a merchant, M. Sannikoff, information to the effect that the body of a mammoth had been discovered under the 73rd degree of latitude, on the Balakhna river, which flows into Khatanga Bay; and it at once invited Baron Toll to take the leadership of an expedition for the investigation of the discovery. The bad state of Baron Toll's health compelled him, however, to decline the offer, and M. Chersky was sent out to make collections of post-tertiary mammals in the far north-east, on the rivers Yana, Indighirka, and Kolyma. After Chersky's untimely death, the proposal to start for the Khatanga was renewed to Baron Toll, and it was decided that he would not only examine the mammoth find—which, after all, might prove to be of no importance—but also make a general exploration of the very little known Anabar region. He left St. Petersburg on January 2, 1893, in company with Lieutenant Shileiko, who undertook the topographical and astronomical work of the expedition, as well as the magnetical observations.

At Irkutsk the explorers learned from Mme. Chersky (who had accompanied her husband during his last journey) that the mammoth