

Who discovered America? We have debated this pointless question for 500 years. There was nothing actually to discover, and with good reason Cristoforo Colombo never used the verb “to discover” nor the word “discovery”. Correctly he didn’t speak about the New World, but “otro mundo”, the other world; say the other half of the globe. The Americas existed already, and already had they been populated. Only the unbound European arrogance and the interests involved in such an extraordinary event could mark as discovery what actually no discovery was.

On the other hand, even if we want to proceed in the same reasoning, we could never state with certainty who the “first one” had been. We only know the last one: Cristoforo Colombo. With him and his contribution to the history of navigation, the whole world changed, and the modern age began. If the Americas are, nowadays, for better or worse, what we know, this is solely thanks to Cristoforo Colombo.

However, what do we know, before that October 12th, 1492, about the many attempts and trips that had been made to that part of the world? It’s an obscure matter, but some points have been accepted, so far. There were travelers from China, Polynesia, Japan.... Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, Rome... Ireland, England... there were Vikings, Basques, and even a king of Mali. And even more.

Is it possible that before Colombo there was another Italian? And may the travel that officially brought to the discovery of the Americas have been not the first one for the Admiral himself? Is it still acceptable to think that he found the Americas not on purpose? Was his case, as some keep telling, an example of “serendipity”? This last statement, has been repeated for 500 years. But it’s not the way the story went.

Not only were there geographic maps behind Colombo’s travel, but a book too. An old, ancient book. A mysterious code. More than one witness stated this fact, during the “Pleitos Combinos”, a long trial of Colombo’s descendants by the Spanish Court. This was repeatedly confirmed by the Turkish admiral Piri Reis.

A book dating back to what time? Maybe from Alexandria’s Library? Was it a Hebrew code? Colombo was an avid reader, in search of knowledge, careful in his notes, almost 2500 in his readings. He used to comment and rework his notes with patience and meticulousness.

We know he was a reader of Plinius. In Plinius we find “All of the West outside of Hercules columns has been explored and observed”. We know that Colombo read the works of the “Geographer” Pope Pius II, who knew of the fine description of the globe by Eratosthenes.

Unfortunately, very little is left of Colombo’s library, the source of his dreams. Enough however, to allow us to understand who this unusual and mysterious sailor was, especially if we think that at his time books were extremely expensive and not very popular. This doesn’t fit with what the interests of a not very rich seaman might have been, and what he could afford. Culture was for the priesthood, and even after Gutenberg it didn’t become available to the masses, but only to wealthy people.

The sailor, however, though as ignorant as historians suppose him to have been, wrote in 1511: “Our Lord blessed me with enough knowledge of astrology (nowadays astronomy), geometry and arithmetic, together with intelligence and attitude, to draw maps with cities, rivers and mountains, all in the proper position. I spent time to study the books of cosmography, history, chronicles, philosophy, and more.” Not bad for a “mere” adventurer! Not to mention that his culture, as he told many times, derived from Greek, Latin, Hebrew works, and from other people. It’s clear that he was an educated scholar, a scientist, a man with a universal perspective, despite modern judgement on him is merely based on his survived books, only a part of those he probably produced.

When portrayed as a brilliant amateur, he fits well with the tradition, uncritically accepted, which claims him as a man of poor culture. This is however contrary to the truth, and it is despite the few remains of the Columbina Library, in Sevilla’s Cathedral, that describes him as an intellectual man, careful and eager to learn. Two of the 2500 marginal notes found on his readings are in Italian, the only hint of Italian in his writings, that alternate between Latin and Castilian. There is much discussion on this point. It is told that many of the notes should be attributed to Bartolomeo, the brother, whose handwriting was similar to Colombo’s. But Don Fernando, Colombo’s son, says that uncle Bartolomeo “didn’t know Latin”.

It’s clear, this is once again an attempt to reduce the importance of the one who had been the “discoverer”, spreading the merit to more people. In spite of this, he would always be recognized as the leader of the family, committed to the “operation Americas”.

The knowledge of Latin, the sacred language, was generally limited to the clergy. Colombo's handwriting, as well as his brother's, was typical of clergymen. It must be remembered that people were at that time mostly illiterate. The feeling that Colombo was actually a knight monk comes as a natural consequence of these descriptions. Most of the times he was in fact depicted as a knight monk.

Another neglected aspect is that Colombo's linguistic difficulties, his problems in syntax and spelling, are typical of someone who was no more in touch with the native land or native language, who embraced the cosmopolite jargon of the sailors, their Portuguese and Castilian. The Italianisms noticeable in his works came after influence of the "maltimes". (See Ulloa Lluís, *Cristòfor Colom fou català*, Barcelona 1927, p. 70.)

His language shows an origin from Greek islands, seat at that time of sea knights and corsairs. Generally ignored is the fact that we know nothing about Colombo's youth, growth and formation. But we know that he had access to Franciscan libraries, which, thanks to missionary trips even to China, were among the richest libraries and the best updated, especially about the East.

It's worth to remember that the Pope in the years between 1484 and 25 July 1492 was Giovanni Battista Cybo, Innocenzo III, who was named the "deçaparecido", and who dedicated his pontificate to saint John the Baptist. He has been pointed out as the real sponsor of Colombo's travel since 1990, after a study by the present author, published in four volumes (the last of which, entitled "The man who went through the world boundaries", was among the five best works of the Acqui Storia Award), argued that he was the real sponsor. The Cybo family originated from Greek islands. Innocenzo VIII was a "civis januensis" like Colombo.

Plato was a revived prophet in an age of cultural disruption and rebirth. The myth of his Atlantis, the destination lost in the memory of the ancient times, suggests the island of Antilia. The Florentine physicist Pier Paolo Toscanelli spurred Colombo to leave, to win over the green darkness of the limitless liquid kingdom over the Pillars of Hercules. Plato had introduced Atlantis. (See Platone, *Tutte le opere*, Newton & Compton editori, Rome 1997, pp. 14-15.)

The Greek philosopher learnt about Atlantis from Solon, who had themselves learnt from the priests of Sais, in Egypt. Plato lived in Taranto for a while, in that Puglia which would be later crossed by crusaders' armies. There, he discovered Architas, the Pythagorean movement, flourishing in Magna Graecia. Plato says in an "epistula": "They are people who look like each other in the opinions, like tanned people do; in front of the complexity of the intellectual life, the efforts you have to endure, how you must proceed in a learning process and in the daily routine, they believe that it's too hard. They can't go on with exercises, and some even convince themselves that they already reached a sufficient level of knowledge, not needing to exert any longer".

Atlantis' name remained in the mind of scholars for thousands of years, to represent a primordial earthly heaven, created by mankind on the earth, like the mythical Shangri-la, Avalon, Walhalla, or Eden, a lost paradise, to be found again, and reconquered. "Faith" meant to Plato "being so obsessed about something that you start really believing in its existence"; it is associated to reach the East *via* the West, it is like the trust in the soul as the principle of life, present in all faiths. All of these concepts are in Colombo's intellectual background, as well as the myth of Atlantis.

Notice also the following, from *Itinerarium* of Alessandro Geraldini (Nuova Eri, Torino 1991, pp. 136-37.):

This land (Americas/Atlantis) - as written by Alessandro Geraldini, who was close to Innocenzo VIII and responsible of Colombo at the Spanish Court - is supposed to be larger than Europe and Asia (therefore distinct from Asia), even considering the eleven thousand islands of which Aristoteles talks in his famous cosmographic research; there are more lands in the southern hemisphere than in the northern, as Plato says in his "Crizia". Even the historian Gomara claimed that Colombo was aware of Atlantis' myth.

Plato's dialogues, much discussed in the Renaissance, where Atlantis is mentioned, are the "Timeus" and the "Critia".

The subject is a golden age, 9 thousand years before Plato's time, when a military defeat hit an army from a far-away land, followed by a terrible natural disaster, which eradicated a primeval civilization. There was a flood, and scholars have been struggling to understand

the story, for centuries. Plato tells: “how overwhelming was the army that invaded the whole of Europe and Africa at the same time, coming from outside the Atlantic Ocean. That ocean was then navigable, and in front of that passage that you call the Pillars of Hercules there was an island, larger than Libya and Asia together: from there, it was possible to reach all the other islands and the continent on the other side of that island... with a great sea, that could with good reason be named ocean, and its surrounding land be really and correctly named continent. In this Atlantis island... after terrible earthquakes and floods, during one annihilating day and night, all your army was buried in the ground, while the Atlantis island plunged into the sea: that area of the ocean is unnavigable and unexplored now, because of the mud from the bottom, arising after the collapse.” (See Platone, *op. cit.*, pp. 549-551.)

Few words, a thousand-years-old riddle, an Atlantic Ocean then navigable, which means that it had been actually navigated. The topic is furtherly discussed in “Critia”, with the same interlocutors, on the same day between 410 and 407 before Christ. The Dialogue is not concluded, the argument is the creation of the ideal state and the hypothesis of a political utopia. The concept of good government, as it is portrayed in the gorgeous fresco in Siena (town characterizing the coat of Templars) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, is one of the ideals of the Renaissance, also a goal of Pope Innocent VIII and Colombo.

Facts dating back to 9000 years in the past, regarding battles among civilizations located on the two different sides of the Atlantic: “One army kept fighting the whole time against the other one under the leadership of Atlantis’ kings. Atlantis was at the time larger than Libya and Asia. Today, sunk by earthquakes, it lies under a muddy sea that hampers ships, stopping their travel.”

Golden age, utopic states, lost societies—they do return. The past in the Renaissance came from studies as well as from excavations. Each discovery was the sign of a concluded cycle, and a sign for another one to start, new and old at the same time. Renaissance is the most real and fervent attempt by our spirit, aiming to the ideal, in a universal fullness. The state was supposed to be ideal, as well as the city, like in the surrealistic tempera work by Luciano Laurana: a masterpiece recently used by Silvio Berlusconi as background to a European meeting in Rome.

Meetings of peoples were ideal too, like in the many masterpieces picturing the visit of the

queen of Saba to king Salomon. Was she to sail beyond the Mediterranean into the Atlantic Ocean, as suggested by a Hebrew document in the Pope's Archives? Was she to find a land called Sypanso (Cipango, according to Colombo), in the direction "95 degrees on western side, through an easy passage"? Pinzon, the Spanish sailor helping Colombo to lead the ships, would confuse it with Japan, a "fertile and luxurious land, larger than Africa and Europa". (See Ambrosini Maria Luisa, *L'Archivio segreto del Vaticano*, Mondadori editore, Milan 1972, p. 179.)

It was Pinzon then, the one who confused Cipango with Japan. How can it be possible, however, if it was a land larger than Africa and Europe?

Man should realize an ideal, as the new Adam, thanks to Colombo as a giant, who brings Jesus Child beyond the waters that Colombo was crossing. Ideal as the Vitruvian man by Leonardo. A golden melting, such as in the alchemic dreams, to get the eventual mix of the opposites, pursued by those looking for the resurrection on Earth. The resurrection of Earth should match with the one in heaven, to bring to us the heavenly Jerusalem. Everything may have been also split, divided forever, at least until nowadays, and it has always been this way every time.

Plato writes about gold, geometric patterns, the triangle and the cube in particular. The etymology of the name of Pope Cybo is *cubos* or *cubus*. The cube, as the finally completed Earth, was inscribable in the circle, the sky. Again the Da Vinci man. Whereas Colombo, after the first sail, and a completely changed situation for him, will use a 7-capital-letters-shaped-as-a-triangle cryptogram as his personal sign:

.S.

.S. A .S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS

Colombo used to say that “he who can read and write, does it in four different ways”. The triangle surely embodies more than one way, and at the third and fourth line can be read as “Christ, Mohammed, Yahweh”, “The Bringer of God”, which matches with what Colombo wrote in the “Book of Prophecies”, i.e. that “the Holy Spirit is present in Christians, Muslims, Hebrew people and in any other sect”. The then Pope Innocenzo had mixed blood, with a Hebrew father and a Muslim mother. It means that the Roman Catholic leader embodied the three great religions of the book, and the ideals of Templars. Never was mankind probably closer to universal peace, as around the end of 1400, with the approaching of the Jubilee in 1500.

Furthermore, the letters repeat in the mentioned setting the Star of David, and have the meaning of a Kiddish, the equivalent of a well-wishing inscription. Therefore, some propose this interpretation:

SHADAI

SHADAI - ADONOI - SHADAI

YAHWH - MALE - CHESED

It's a war call to God, the holy and only one, the God of Armies from the Old Testament. One sign, so many questions.

Even a film director of today, Ridley Scott, in the fine movie “1492, the conquest of Paradise”, has Pinzon asking Colombo: But why does a mariner stay seven years in a convent with Franciscans? The navigator is full of energies, aiming at discoveries by new and hard experiences. But he waits in the company of monks. Sure he has to get the permission by the king, but he has also to deepen the cultural aspects for an enterprise that

will be repeated and cannot fail.

Plato can't be absent in Colombo's studies of philosophers. The Greek philosopher used to say that the worst sickness is ignorance, and ignorance is something that Colombo, unlike his detractors, when he was alive and when he was dead, never suffered from.

The sailor reads and studies carefully, and tries, in his view, to give to the known but deformed world a shape as close as possible to the true one. The world had been deformed like in a fallacious mirror, into a flat sphere, because of some silly fundamentalists, faithful to the geographic ignorance of holy books. His deed would overcome any partial vision, any mistaken geographic and then political, ideological and theological interpretation. Each of these fundamentalists used to emphasize on geographic maps their own importance and areas of influence. Jerusalem was then the navel of the world, the center of the terrestrial circle from which the light came. The East was often seen in the place of the current North, whereas the South according to Arabian customs was set in the upper position, a complete swap to nowadays conventions. The errors of not knowing added to the altered knowledge, because of approximation or convenience. Colombo's geography will reset any previous vision. Rather than physical persons remembered in legends, maps, books, codes are the real "unknown drivers", who will lead the way to the man called to find it. (See Afetinan A., *Life and works of Piri Reis. The oldest map of America*, Turkish Historical Society, Ankara 1987, p. 22.)

The admiral Piri Reis, a "super partes" witness, comes in our help through Colombo's knowledge and venture. The unfaithful Turkish—do note that the definition "unfaithful" was accepted on both sides and was used by followers of each of these religions—writes in his most important work, the "Kitab-I Bahriyye", say "The book of the sailing": "This land is named Antille ... as those islands were discovered. There was a wise man in Genoa called 'Kolon'. He was lucky to find an interesting book, probably older than Alexander the Great's times. This book contained so much information about the seas... that's how that wise man sailed and found these islands and opened the way... He acted according to this book, revealing the Antille Islands".

A "wise man", "named Kolòn", as if it was a stage-name! But the most sensational passage is where Piri Reis, in the captions to his famous map of 1513, now at the Topkapi museum in

Istanbul, says that Colombo reached the Antilles in the year 890 of the Egira. Nobody did translate this date. Only Alessandro Bausani, the greatest Italian Islamist, did it, as much as we know, without any comment though. The resulting date is 1485, in the very middle of the pontificate of Innocenzo VIII Cybo.

In Peloso Silvano's *Al di là delle Colonne d'Ercole* (Editore Sette Città, Viterbo 2004, p. 246), we find the following statement: "The glory of the finding this island Antila, before the time of Caesar, is attributed to Carthaginians according to Aristotle, but nowadays it is credited to Portuguese and English and French corsairs, who reached it several time by chance."

Some authors claim that also Ptolemy mentions it. So even Ptolemy knew it. (See "Descrittione e istoria del regno de l'isole Canarie già dette Fortunate con il parere delle loro fortificazioni" [Description and history of Canary Islands, called Fortunate in virtue of their strengths] by the architect from Cremona, Leonardo Torriani, a very educated man, who wrote it between 1580 and 1584 for Portugal: "Aristotle says in the 'Book of wonderful facts of nature' that some Carthaginian merchants were said to have sailed through the Atlantic Ocean to a fertile island... which was named by some Portuguese as Antila in their maps. (See again Peloso Silvano, *op. cit.*, p. 119.)

In Piri Reis' map the unknown America is present with long unexplored pieces of the southern coast. Brazil and some regions that would be found (nay re-found) centuries later. Even Antarctica, in the part of the land now named of the Queen of Maud, is recognizable, reproduced as in a pre-ice age, free from ice. It can be dated to 10000 years B.C. When the last of the known continents was yet undiscovered (the official date for discovery is 1818), it appears in a position different from the present one, in a temperate zone. This was possibly before the coming of the ice age. Which sources inspired Piri Reis?

In that very beautiful but incomplete map, covered with sketches and important notes, you can see many hints of the Americas that will be known after Colombo, up to details of the extreme ends of the southern part. Pictures appear of lamas, parrots and other animals never seen before. The coordinates are based on the sphere of the Greek astronomer Eratosthenes, who was director of the library of Alexandria. The longitude is accurate, though two centuries in advance of the known technology to determine it. The outlines of

the lands are surprising in their accuracy. In conclusion, an absolutely “improbable” map. The Norwegian explorer Nordenskiöld believed that it had been copied from another original, of Carthaginian origin.

Piri Reis goes on saying in his long notes alongside the images in the map, that Colombo learnt from his book that in the west there existed coasts, islands, mines and precious stones. Colombo was a great astronomer (“muneccim”). Littorals and coasts showing up on this map are taken by Colombo’s map: nobody from this century has a map like this, developed and drawn “by the humble myself” [bu fakir]. The present map comes from comparative researches, done on twenty maps and globes, among which the oldest one, dating back to Alexander the Great, includes the whole inhabited world and is the kind of map called by Arabians “ca’ feriiyye”. This set includes a map developed by Colombo for the western hemisphere. (See Bausani Alessandro, *L’Italia nel Kitab-I Bahriyye di Piri Reis*, a cura di Leonardo Capezzone, *Eurasiatica* 19, Venice 1990.) The translation that we used was made by Bausani, a prestigious Islamist. His translation of the Koran into Italian is still considered unrivalled. Bausani’s work is part of the books published by the department of Eurasian studies of the University of Venice. Furthermore, Piri Reis was a sufi, as confirmed by Gabriele Mandel, the most eminent Sufi in Italy; it means that he belonged to the spiritualist and universalist current of Islam. Sufis were in close touch with Christian knights, mainly with Templars.

And then Colombo’s papers, Colombo’s books. “The whole inhabited world”, a “Western hemisphere”...

According to the Turkish admiral it was the year 890 of Hegira! Or maybe year 896, because the passing of time made the date hard to read. These are years 1485 or 1491 of the Christian age! Years that fit with what is carved on the marble, in the epigraph on the tomb of Colombo’s fellow Genoese pope in S. Peter:

INNOCENTIO VIII CYBO PONT[IFICI] MAX[IMO]

ITALICAE PACIS PERPETUO CUSTODI
NOVI ORBIS SUO AEVO INVENTI GLORIA
REGI HISPANIARUM CATHOLICI NOMINE IMPOSITO
CRUCIS SACRO SANCTAE REPERTO TITULO
LANCEA QUAE CHRISTI HAUSIT LATUS
A BIAZETE TURCARUM TYRANNO (IMPER[ATORE]) DONO MISSA
AETERNUM INSIGNI
MONUMENTUM E VETERE BASILICA HUC TRASLATUM
ALBERICUS CYBO MALASPINA
PRINCEPS MASSAE
FERENTILLI DUX MARCHIO CARRARIAE ET C[ETERA]
PRONEPOS
ORNATIUS AUGUSTIUSQ. POSUIT ANNO DOM. MDCXXI

We should consider also the further hypothesis in “Dedicatoria” of his *Sumario de la natural Historia de las Indias*: “Que come es notorio, don Cristóbal Colón, primero almirante de estas Indias, las descubrió en tiempo de los Católicos reyes don Fernando y doña Isabel, abuelos de vuestra majestad, en el año de 1491 años... ‘Novi orbis suo aevo inventi gloria!’ ... in the time of his pontificate - from 1484 to 1492 - the discovery of a new world”. In line

with the words written by Panvinio, few years after the discovery. It's an extraordinary document. (See Oviedo Gonzalo Fernández, *Sumario de la natural historia de las indias*, Dastin Historia, Madrid, p. 56; The editor of the volume, Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois, comments in a note: "Unexplainable dating error in such a careful and reputed man".)

Referring to Innocenzo VIII, Burcardo's successor writes in the beginning of the 16th century, in his narration of the lives of the popes: "Other great events occurred, and the greatest ever, was at the end of his pontificate, when Colombo discovered a new world, and not without mystery that happened during an age when a Genoese was reigning the Christian world, another Genoese found another world where to establish the Christian religion." Not without mystery, a statement for a further pre-discovery "at the end of his pontificate". Together with year 1485, years 1490-1491 also appear. The Spanish court historian, Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, considered by some as the first historian of the Indies, confirmed like Panvinio and with no doubt this further hypothesis in the "Dedicatoria" of his *Summary of the Natural History of the Indies*, as seen above.

"It's well-known" ..., "about these Indies", not the ones already known...

Were the travels before 1492 more than one? Are we entitled with Colombo to conjecture on travels, furtherly back in time, in the middle of a tangle of neglected and messed-up data, to make maybe October 1492 the only official event, so as to create an historical universal fraud and eradicate a pope from history, Giovanni Battista Cybo, who dreamed about putting a knight of the sea, a "brother", on Peter's throne?

In the middle of the 16th century, Pier Vincenzo Dante de Rinaldi wrote that "he had seen copies of letters of mentioned Colombo sent from Seville to the scholar mathematician Paolo Toscanelli Fiorentino. The discovery of the Indies done by Colombo took place in 1491, i.e. 9 years after Maestro Paolo's death. It sounds so unlikely that Colombo was ignoring from 1484 to 1492 the death of a man he regarded so much and famous in the world". Again: "Cristoforo Colombo demonstrated in the year 1491 that it is false that the torrid and the cold zones were not inhabitable, because as he left Spain and sailed westwards he discovered lands within that torrid zone, returning to Spain after four months loaded with gold and precious stones. He reported he found the mentioned zone very inhabited instead. I personally read in a couple of letters he sent from Seville to the erudite Paolo Toscanelli

Fiorentino, who sent them to me". Pier Vincenzo belonged to a family of artists and geographers. Egnazio Danti produced the amazing gallery of geographic maps in Vatican. The famed Renaissance historian Guicciardini commented himself, years later: "Even more praiseworthy was the navigation of Spaniards, started in the year 1490 thanks to Colombo"

Are these only inaccuracies, from such careful authors? How far does that world extend, up to where do those islands and unbounded lands reach, that heavenly and wild Eden? Limitless territories, in extension and richness, that mankind since ever knew only partially, like scattered pieces of a unique puzzle? Who may have been aware of them, though partially; who landed there? The Americas are even this endless tangle of lands, reached through the ages, but never totally acknowledged during the history of mankind.

Who touched them, who landed there? The list is endless, and as the investigation extends back for centuries, the number is higher and higher: one, ten, maybe one hundred sailors lost by wind and storms, pushed by their braveness or perfectly aware, sailors coming from all four corners of the world, the known ones and the others unknown until then. How to be surprised, given that a 14-year-old boy was able to cross the Atlantic Ocean on a sailing boat in 2007?

It is a letter, retrieved only in 1956, that suggests another detail on the background. Written in winter 1497-1498 by a merchant, John Day, it arrived in Andalusia from England. It was directed to a Spanish notable, mentioned as "the great Admiral". It must have been Cristoforo Colombo. There is a detailed report about one of his trips, speaking about a landing, in the past, years before to official "discovery", of ships from Bristol. "We surely know", Day wrote to the Great Admiral, "that the extreme end of this land" (from which Caboto was just back) "had been seen and discovered in the past by men from Bristol, who found Brazil, as His Excellency knows very well. It was named Brazil island, and we believe it's the same land found by the men of Bristol!" (See Geoffrey Jules Marcus, *La conquista del Nord Atlantico*, Ecig Editore, Genoa 1992, pp. 275-76.)

"As His Excellence knows very well". The confirmation is in another letter, this time from the Admiral himself, as usual shortened and sent from Hispaniola to the kings in 1495. On just one page you can read: "I sailed in the year 1477 in February, one hundred leagues beyond the Island of Tile, whose austral band is 73 degrees distant from equinoctial, rather

than 63 as asserted by some, and doesn't lay within the line including the West, as defined by Ptolemy, but rather more on the western side. To this land, as large as England, the English sailors head with their goods, especially those from Bristol, and when I went there, the sea was not frozen, with very high tides instead, that in some spots the sea raised and went down 25 ells twice a day. (See Colombo Cristoforo, *Gli scritti*, Einaudi editore, Turin 1992, p. 169.) Colombo is therefore aware of the destination of the men of Bristol. Did he ever join them?

The following is from *Hera*, volume 14, 2001. Thor Heyerdhal, the anthropologist who recently died, declared to the Oslo newspaper "Aftenposten", that Colombo participated as geographer to a ship expedition which in 1477 (as mentioned already, with the words of Colombo himself), after having passed the Davis Strait, landed on the American continent, between Greenland and Canada. Did Colombo travel on their ships, accompanying them on their routes?

Tile is, according to myth, the most distant of the lands in the north, or northwest, also called Thule, the least known place in the geographic knowledge of the ancients. Colombo remembers among his predictions one from Seneca, who in "Medea" wrote: "Years will come, when a large land will show up. An unknown sailor, similar to Jason's guide Tifis, will discover a new world, and then Thule will be no longer the most distant of the lands". (See Colombo Cristoforo, *Libro delle profezie*, by William Melczer, Novecento Edizioni, Palermo 1992, p. 123.)

It must be underlined, however, that as it happened for Brazil, Antilia and Cipango, "the name Tula had been given to different regions, because even now you can find it in Russia as well as in Central America... We know that the Mexican Tula was founded by Toltec. Toltec are supposed to originate from Aztlan, 'the land surrounded by water', clearly Atlantis, and brought the name Tula from their original land; the place named in that way was probably a substitute of a lost continent". (See Guénon René, *Il re del mondo*, Adelphi Editore, Milan 2005, p. 95.)

Nowadays remains of the Mexican Tula still exist, among them pyramidal temples, set among agaves, white soft beaches and blue waters, in a place on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in front of Europe and Africa. (See Carnac Pierre, *La storia inizia a Bimini*,

C. Tedeschi editore, Florence 1975, p. 282; in the language of the natives of Guatemala, "Tula" (or "Tollan") meant "Source of the Light", in a broad sense, "East".)

With the last Tule the myth of Atlantis re-emerges again, the land searched by everyone and never found, a mother legend to all the legends. Myth that goes back to the "Dialogues" by Plato and once again to the universal library of Alexandria, deposit of the universal knowledge and the esoteric culture: a deposit from which the sailor had his secret map or book, also preserved in the library of Innocent VIII.

The existence of the Antilles was claimed by Roman scholars since the time of Isidorus. Isidorus was bishop in Seville (560-636 AD), he was a Church erudite, whose works acted as a junction between the classic and the modern world. Isidorus favored the rebirth of culture and literature. He refused the idea of a world shaped as a T, like a cross, where the continents related to the three Noah's sons: Sem for Asia, Cam for Africa and Japhet for Europe, since a civilization without fathers, not generated from Abraham, Noah, Moses, was not conceivable. In the "Etymologies" you could read "they say there is another continent beside the currently known ones, beyond the ocean, extending from north to south, and down there the sun is warm like nowhere on our countries". (See Afetinan A., *op. cit.*, p. XX.)

Was it the paradise described by the geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes, a contemporary of Isidore? Was it the land inhabited before the Flood, the partially sunken Atlantis? The level of detail shows an accurate knowledge of the mysterious continent that can only be linked to the experiences of previous explorers, confirming the thesis that those lands don't belong to an already known and highly civilized India, but to a wild land, absent from maps. It's told that inhabitants of that land really appreciated glass marbles (the same that Colombo used to trade), giving in exchange real pearls, their pearls laying just two ells deep in the water, along the shores. What if Colombo had brought the same trash to the Chinese aristocracy, or to proud Japanese samurais: wouldn't he risk to be beheaded, as it happened to others? Could he raise crosses in those lands, as a mark of conquer? It would have been a declaration of war rather than a quest for alliance.

Pearls were in medieval idea the dew of heaven, but also the symbol of gnosis, of knowledge. The doors of the heavenly Jerusalem, which Colombo wanted to recreate on

Earth, were made from pearls (See Baldock John, *Simbolismo cristiano*, Mondadori Editore, Milan 1997, p. 135-36.): “The pearl, hidden behind the abyssal waters, is available to man when he emerges from water, born again through the baptism”.

Colombo picked the pearls and brought the baptism. The pearls will be one of the reasons for many accusations to Colombo. As usual denigrators will accuse Colombo, telling that he tried to get hold of them without informing the Spanish king firstly, or that he didn't understand the new opportunities offered by the new lands. Colombo was still acceptable as a “hero by chance”, but was considered as an idiot thinking to have landed in the Indies. He doesn't understand when he finds beds of pearls, he thinks of Genghis Khan when Indios speak about Cubanacan, he is sure he reached China when being told about limitless lands, and believes everything he is told, turning out to be derailed every time. All of this on four trips in different years, more than 10 years of exploring! When he starts the trip he's a dreamer, when he lands he's gullible. A stranger and a fool in Spain, even more in a land where he doesn't know the language.

Lands rich in pearls, gold, mines and stones, were described in the old book once owned by Colombo, also by Marco Polo (1254-1324), i.e. “Il Milione”. The description matches with Colombo's expectations, even in detail. Nevertheless, what Marco Polo told, well known by Colombo, would confuse Colombo, making him believe that he had reached Asia. Is it a credible reconstruction?

This time the work by Polo, with Colombo's notes, exists, although not in a complete state. The Venetian had preceded the sailor, when he reached China two centuries before, heading East overland, accompanied by his father Nicolò and uncle Matteo. Polo left in Genoa's public jails his memories, helped by Rustichello da Pisa, who was a famous author, having made popular king Arthur, and probably a knight himself. We would like to know how and why a relation started between an appraised literate and a merchant, popular but put in jail after taking part to a war.

Polo's Venetian origin reminds us of the solid relation of the lagoon city with the East, especially with Constantinople, known as the “Second Rome”. A legend says that after the fourth crusade the Templars stole John the Baptist's head from Constantinople. The head was worshipped instead of Jesus, in line to the “Templar heresy” and lately related to

Baphomet. The pontificate of Innocent VIII was associated with John the Baptist too.

Constantinople was defined by a crusader as “the supreme city, over any else”, with its Golden Horn, golden doors, where people used to tell that golden lions could make golden birds fly in the sky with their roar. Polo’s family owned a house on the shore kissed by that sea, a golden sea at sunset, in a place called by the crusaders “Saint George’s arm”, not far from the house of the Zeno family, fellow citizens and among the many possible pre-discoverers of America.

Many believe today (and we agree) that the Zeno family’s memories of their trip were only an educated fake, as the “privilegio di stampa” was given to them thanks to two ambiguous persons. One is Nicolò Robusto Cipriota, a Carmelitan friar, who will be later prohibited to preach, being accused of printing a heretic book; the other is Alfonso de Ulloa, who arrived in Venice in 1547 looking for a job: he had started working as secretary of the Spanish ambassador don Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, in an Embassy that became the source of international plots and deceptive propaganda. Ulloa translated the book by Fernando Colombo (the son) about the life of his father, published in Venice in 1571. This book was a tampered biography, inherited by untrustworthy people and published too late after the real events. It’s another book trying to obscure Colombo’s success with retroactive propaganda. What a better way, to make things even more complicated, than to invent previous discoverers, to demonstrate that the Admiral didn’t deserve his glory? Who else than Ulloa could do a better job, favouring his country; he, who had the availability of the original text, together with the details of 100 years of transoceanic trips, could create a plausible patchwork, on purpose affected by errors, to make it more credible, and create two knights and sailors from the Zeno family, of which no evidence exists.

Compelled by later events to leave, to an oriental region with bad relations with the Roman Church, the Polos settled in Soldaia, not far from Caffa. Soldaia would be in future years a rich and flourishing Genoese colony, a Christian outpost in a strategically and economically important area. It will be lost, after the coming of the Turks, in the second half of the fifteenth century. In Soldaia there was an abbey of Franciscan monks. The names of the places, like those of the protagonists, may appear and disappear, but remain somehow connected, despite the years, the centuries, the changing of cities, lands and continents. In those years Mongols were defeated by the Mamluk in Galilee, after the fall of Egypt under

the Mamluk, who were from Turkey, and became a source of trouble in the East as well in the West.

Marco Polo was another Italian, a sailor and obscure figure. Was he another pre-discoverer?

He was not very well known either, and assumptions are more than available data, including the possibility that he never existed. His name reminds of the author of the second Gospel, the Venetian saint, who was the first bishop of the mythical Alexandria, of the famous library, and where he founded the first Christian Church. He is called by tradition with his modern name, but in the Acts of Apostles he is also named "Giovanni, aka Marco". He was the umpteenth John! Polo refers from North to South to an incomplete geography, between the ice-covered extreme ends of the world, filled with names sounding like oracles.

Someone conjectured that the Venetian never reached China, given that he never mentions the tea ceremony, or the great wall (a giant monument that couldn't be unnoticed). Among so many coincidences, assumptions, we have some sure points. It's certain that the Polos too, looked to the Pope, to Jerusalem and to Christianity as fundamental references. Marco was the member of a diplomatic mission sent by pope Gregory X to Kubilay Khan. He brought the essence from the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, as an offer to the Emperor of the Orient. During his endless wanderings ("he spent 36 years in those lands", it is said in the Tuscan version of the "Milione"), he lived in Saint John of Acres, before entering a fantastic land. Notice that Acres was the outpost of the crusading knights, in the heart of the Muslim empire, preserved by the Templars (the last defenders), the Hospitaller and others, and the continuous presence of the Franciscan monks. (See Imperio Loredana, *Templari*, Trentini Editore, year 1 n. 2, Ferrara 2001, pp. 31-32.)

An interesting document from crusaders deserves to be mentioned. Dated 1257, it regards the agricultural production in the Acres diocese, and speaks about "maize". Maize, coming from the Americas, is supposed to have been known only after Colombo's trip.

The expedition stops in Acres, abruptly, after the Pope's death and the consequent vacancy. The apostolic Legate, Tedaldo Visconti da Piacenza (soon to be Pope Gregorio X) suggests to wait, before going ahead. "In Acres patriarchal palace the two Polos, accompanied by the young Marco, knelt down to the Pope and received his blessing. He substituted the letters

he had signed as Legate with others, very different, in which he also asked Kubilay to encourage Aboga's (the khan in Persia) good intentions to favor the Catholics; in other words, to push him in the antimuslim alley for the defense of the oversea kingdom and the protection of the pilgrimage to the holy Places. He added many gorgeous gifts to the oil for lamps from Jerusalem, gifts made of crystal and many others. (See Zorzi Alvise, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.)

Rome did never forgo thinking of Oversea, Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulcher. Popes and monks were associated with the beginning of the Polos' mission, but will then disappear; yet ambassadors, Pope Legates, priests, and counselors accompany Marco Polo in his adventure. Marco Polo was certainly close to the Dominicans. (See Polo Marco, *Il Milione* (1), with notes by Cristoforo Colombo, Edizioni Paoline, Turin 1985, p. 17.)

Marco Polo was so close to the Dominicans, that when, about 70 years after his travel, the Dominicans decided to decorate the church of S. Maria Novella in Florence - the famous Spanish Chapel, created by Andrea Bonaiuto (1366-68) - with a set of frescos, they wanted a group of lay people near the saints and the deeds of the Order. This group gathered characters of the culture beloved by the monks, such as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Cimabue, Giotto, and even (but it's not certain) Nicolò, Matteo and Marco Polo. The last one holds a large tome in his arms, arguably the *Milione*.

Marco Polo's moves were then led by Rome. The Templars were very influent between Piacenza (the Pope's town) and Acres (headquarters of the Templars). The aristocratic lady Felipa of the family of Pallestrello (or Perestrello) from Piacenza would be Colombo's future wife, in a then impossible marriage, given the different family background, a marriage that can be explained only with a different approach than the usual one. Colombo got acquainted with Felipa as he frequented the Portuguese Christ Knights, who were a direct emanation of the Order of the Temple, never disappeared from those extreme regions facing the Atlantic and the America.

It sounds like an already-known story, to those who want to investigate Colombo. A story already seen, already read, however yet to be seen, yet to be read, given the connections between the sailor and Rome. Even Marco Polo's expedition often looks like a religious mission, in a reversed way to Colombo's one, by land rather than by water. Many of the

objectives and premises (financial, political, Christian ones) seem to be the same. It must be considered that the Venetian was a man with a western Christian background (not lacking a hostility to Muslims), surprisingly interested in other cultures. His story can be told with impartiality and when it is the case, with convinced admiration. (See Polo Marco, *op. cit.* (1), p. 17. In the first part of Marco Polo's book, his intention to mark his travel as a religious mission is clear.)

Religious characterizations are frequent, from the moment the three Venetians took the oil from the lamp of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem to the description of the Christian sects in Western Asia, the telling about the miracles of faith against infidels and the story of the visit of the three Magi to Jesus Child.

At least four had been the expeditions before Polo, and the number could be much higher if others were kept in account, expeditions of religious people including Franciscans, Dominicans and the Genoese Fieschi, in the attempt to reunite the Christian world to which Pope Innocent IV aimed. Fieschi was the predecessor who inspired Pope Innocent VIII Cybo. It was a matter of spiritual communion and surely blood ties, at least for Colombo, as Las Casas tells, since he was related with the Fieschi family.

Did anyone since the time of Alexander the Great dare complete the knowledge of the world? How far did s/he go? Between the Gordian boundary in the East and the boundary in the West, at the Pillars of Hercules, the known world seemed actually to be inescapable, in a perfect equilibrium of terror. Monsters from everywhere, sea monsters (the giant squids seen today are memes of the enormous octopuses that scared sailors) in the Atlantic Ocean, land monsters in Asia, with beastlike men such as Gog and Magog. Any trespasser would get into deadly trouble.

While the ocean had remained a taboo, because less accessible, the need of new markets opened the "silk road" and the "spice road" commerce. Not only the Christian people used to reach those lands, the Islamic merchants were active as well, one in particular preceded the Polos by four centuries. Many others followed him, as an Arabian scholar Abu Zeid tells.

Merchants moved looking to profit; the Church to spread the word of Christ, to create a spiritual and universal world dominated by peace. It is told that the Franciscan Lorenzo

from Portugal tried to reach those lands, but the trip is not confirmed. The Umbrian Franciscan Giovanni Pian del Carpine reached Karacorum, capital of the Tatars; he had accomplished different tasks on behalf of San Francis himself. Once again it was Pope Innocent IV Fieschi to counterbalance the proselytism of mendicant friars, assigning a similar mission to the Dominican Ascelino Lombardo from Cremona, accompanied by Andrea di Logumel, lately accomplishing another visit, and thereafter, William of Rubruk, a Flemish Franciscan.

Few the conversions, as the one of Toqtai, a khan of the Golden Horde, in the early years of the 14th century. Kubilay was an exception in listening to Christian proposals, probably influenced by his many Nestorian-Christian princesses and in particular by his bride or mother, Sayor-gatani Baigi, who will meet Marco. A conclusion of this partial missionary context will be, in 1294, the arrival in the East of the monk Giovanni da Montecorvino, on behalf of Nicolò IV.

Who was Marco Polo? So many details describe him as an ambassador, a messenger from Rome, the umpteenth of the masked knights: "It seems to me that Marco Polo undoubtedly belongs to the secret brotherhood of the Temple. It is widely known that as he was freed from jail, he donated the first copy of his book to Tebaldo da Cepoy, Templar Master, as a reverence act for Monsignor Carlo, son of the king of France and Earl of Valois, in August 1307. As another more convincing reason, notice that he who actually wrote the Milione was Rusticano da Pisa, probably sent from the Order of the Temple to cheer Marco Polo up in jai". (See Pezzella Nicola, *Il Templarismo nel Veneto e l'architettura neotemplare*, in Atti del XIX Convegno di Ricerche templari, Edizioni Penne e Papiri, Latina 2002, pp. 42-44. The authors refer to a work by Cesare Augusto Levi, "a deep expert of masonic Templarism".)

Even the Zeno family belongs to the masonic Templarism.

Another knight, a knight monk like Colombo? Another Christo Ferens as Colombo used to call himself when signing documents? The Polos are portrayed in the miniature of an old

code from London as wearing a monk frock similar to those used by Franciscans. (See Polo Marco, *op. cit.* (1), p. 25, note 25.) That Marco Polo gains his place, on purpose or not, among Catholic missionaries, mostly Franciscans, is confirmed by the interesting English code B. M. Reg. 19 D. 1, which collects relations from missionaries but also the mythical scripts by Alexander the Great: it represents the Polo brothers dressed as Franciscans in front of the Great Khan, who asks them to bring the Pope his requests.

Colombo will wear, in the moments of despair, repentance and death the Franciscan habit, a cloth with a special meaning, a monk frock worn at the limits of heresy. Marco Polo, as a Colombo precursor, inspired by the ideology of understanding among different civilizations? A character whose contribution to the world can be somehow connected to the “new man” of the Humanism and Renaissance?

The *Milione* was not studied and carefully annotated only by Colombo. It was read by Don Pedro (the Infant of Portugal), by the Portuguese king Henry the sailor (whose knights of the sea, heirs of the Templars, obviously aimed to the Atlantic Ocean), and by the Florentine physicist Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli, who pushed Colombo to the American enterprise. It was read by scholars and sailors. What was there so interesting, new, hidden or revealed, beside the beauty of exoticness and the wonders of Asia? Were they using a lost original copy? Which was their version, given that the first one had been lost? The most popular transcription, known in Europe, was by the Dominican Francesco Pipino, who removed from the Latin version all the passages that could suggest any view, heretic or heterodox, in favor to Christian or pagan sects in Asia. (See Polo Marco, *op. cit.* (1), p. 33.)

Hit by censorship were ideological relativism and tolerance, common features of the protagonists of the story. However, a doubt is now legitimate, that Marco's narration could hide even the geographical heresies regarding the forgotten “otro” (other) world, especially if we carefully consider a legendary country such as the Cipango, the supposed Japan, a place that became the main subject of interest over all the other descriptions, though equally fascinating. Even those who have never read the *Milione* have some knowledge about Cipango, the country of the golden roofs. Other topics in the narration would deserve the same - or even more - attention. But this didn't happen, and it's quite surprising. Why so much hype around Cipango?

From Cardini Franco's *Gerusalemme d'oro, di rame, di luce* (Il Saggiatore Mondadori Editore, Milan 1991, pp. 89-90), we have the following: "Not for no reason, a milestone of the success of *Milione* was exactly one of its most incredible passages, though the one least based on direct observation. Marco had spoken about the mysterious Cipangu (or Zipangu), the modern Japan, which the Khan Qubilay repeatedly tried to conquer in 1274 and 1281, failing both times: according to the legend, a divine wind, furiously arose, pushed back the invaders' ships, from a country where even roofs were made of massive gold".

The reasoning behind it was, after all, simple: despite the great wonders he had seen in Asia, Polo never found the incredible treasures described in the stories of Prete Gianni and in the novels by Alexander. Reluctant to give up, as if they were just fiction, he placed them in the unexplored island of the rising sun. It was that passage from the Polo's works that inspired Colombo and pushed him to reach the East by pointing westwards. The legend of Eldorado has cities covered with gold its roots too.

Cipango, golden roofs and golden statues, precious stones: Eldorado. Marco Polo and Cristoforo Colombo are on the same track. Same destination and same dream. Is however the localization of those legendary names credible? Which country is Marco Polo talking about? The passage seems to mix up elements that need to be somehow separated, because they can't be linked to a common factor. The inconsistencies are so many that they lead to the hypothesis of a land, which has nothing to do with Japan. Notice that Japan had no official name in the ancient times, at least for outsiders. It started being called Nippon or Nihon after 670 A.D.

It has been theorized that Cipangu or Zipangu (there are even more names, such as Cinpangu, Xipangu, Sipangu, even Antilya) is the accepted version of the Chinese *Jin-pen-kuo*. Japan was, in the age of Colombo, an archipelago with a very developed and sophisticated culture, where gold is present, in small quantities, and there are no beds of pearl oysters. The venetian had been travelling through incredible regions, meeting any kind of architectural wonders and treasures. Why should the top of the unbelievable and astonishing be in Japan? Why should the myth of the country with golden roofs and precious stones, which will be so controversial and triggered searches, be overlapped to an Asian India, suddenly different from all the rest of India? The Japanese archipelago was not present in the maps of the years we are talking about, and was ignored in the antiquity. (See

Capomazza di Campolattaro Benedetto, *Affari sociali internazionali*, n. 4, Milan 1986. p. 11.) In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (p. 249) instead, there is the description of a globe dated 1457, attributed to Toscanelli, offered in 1459 to the ambassadors of the king of Portugal, where Japan is already called Japan, rather than Cipangu.

Now, let's look at his *Milione*. (See Polo Marco, *Il Milione*, Mondadori Editore, Milan 1999, p. 240.) It is worthwhile to report that, when it starts talking of Cipango, the book warns "Here it starts the book of the Indies", a strange passage since the author had spoken only of the Indies. The famous description by Marco Polo of the extraordinary and mysterious Japan, follows:

Cipangu is an eastern island, in the middle of the ocean, 1500 miles from the continent (thus it can't be China, n.d.a.). It's a large island (Japan is not, n.d.a.). The inhabitants have fair skin (many indios had, n.d.a.) and are well mannered (it sounds like when Colombo met the indios, n.d.a.): they worship idols (a description applied to the Indios, Japanese used to pray Buddha, who was considered a Christian saint since the XI century), and independent, they don't recognize any other authority than themselves. They have large mines of gold, because this metal is present in Cipangu in large amounts (there was no gold in Japan, n.d.a.) ... they have many pearls (the pre-columbian Americas will be a natural chest of pearls, n.d.a.). In Japan the people use to put one pearl in the mouth of the dead, before burying (the Indios had a similar customs, as recent findings from pre-columbian Peruvian tombs demonstrate, n.d.a.)" (See Polo Marco, *op. cit.*, p. 242.)

The odd details are more and more numerous, always referring to Cipango. Details that tell about idolatry, flesh eaters, an endless ocean, seven thousand islands, men whose life is a mix of weirdness and oddities. (See Polo Marco, *op. cit.* pp. 245-46.)

You'd better know - again the text from Marco Polo - that when the idolaters in these islands have a prisoner who is not their friend, if no ransom is be paid, they invite relatives and friends at home, they kill the man, they cook it and the whole family eats him. The human flesh is considered the best food ... this sea is located in the east, and there are, according to the most expert sailors able to navigate through it, seven thousands four hundred forty-eight islands inhabited islands. It must be said that on each of these islands there are trees with a lovely and strong smell (almost the descriptions by Colombo, n.d.a.),

and that are very useful... there are very precious things such as gold and stones; but these islands are so distant that it takes one year to get there (Japan is very close to China, n.d.a.)... You have to know that these places are very distant from India, and it's important to remark that they are not close to the sea of Cin, but lie in the Ocean sea instead." The reference to the endless extension of the Pacific is clear.

The distances to this wonderful and terrible place are too great, even when keeping in account a percentage of error, and any relation with Japan must be excluded. It lies in the very middle of the largest ocean, the only one deserving to be called ocean, i.e. the Pacific. It's about places so distant from India that it takes one year to get there. You start in winter and will be back in summer, since there are only two kinds of wind, one that brings you to the archipelago and one that brings you back, one blows in summer and the other in winter. Monsoonal and oceanic winds have nothing to do with those blowing between Chinese and Japanese coasts; one year of navigation is required, whereas Japan is at a short distance from mainland Asia.

Colombo, whose final goal must have been, after America, the Chinese Asia, provided himself at the first journey with food for a one-year travel. According to *Il Milione*, it would take one year to travel from China to Cipango, and then another year to travel from Cipango-America to China.

Anthropophagy was not practised by samurais; it will become a justification to kill South American natives. Many of the supposed habits of the idolaters, are part of the background of the culture of the "wild man", and have nothing to do with the Japanese traditions. Japanese worshipped Buddha, rather than idols, and Buddha was considered a Christian saint. Maybe the descriptions from Marco Polo don't fit entirely to our knowledge of the culture of the American natives, but the most impressive details, such as the exceptional amount of gold (in the buildings, in the floors, in the rooms and in the windows framed with gold), remind us of the myth of Eldorado, the Indian-American Eldorado.

Another fundamental detail cancels the identification of Cipango with Japan. Marco Polo tells that Kubilai (the "Great Khan who reigns now"), sent two barons, leading a ship army. They reached Cipango, to conquer it. They landed, occupied fields and houses, but no "city", no "castle". When a sudden wind put at risk the whole fleet, they had just the time to

embark themselves, but eventually shipwrecked.

Those who didn't drown reached the shore, others were able to move away from the coast, on the ships that hadn't been destroyed by the hurricane. At the end, 30,000 Tatars remained on the island, with no hope to be rescued, also because the lord of Cipango used his ships to catch them and make them prisoners. The description of this shows expert fighters such as the Japanese behaving carelessly, which is highly unbelievable.

Nobody was left to protect the conquered ships. The clever Tatars noticed this and tried to escape through land, where they hid themselves, being chased by the enemy. With a trick they reached their own ships, and sailed to a larger island. Thanks to stolen flags they were able to have the doors open, win the enemy and conquer a city, where only old people and women had been left. They took the most beautiful ladies. Useless was the attempt of the Tatars to send a message to their lord: "when they realized that they had been abandoned, they gave up to have their lives saved, and resigned to stay on the island forever". It was the year 1281. Japan had never been invaded by China, in spite of many attempts, none of them successful. In 1281 and maybe even earlier, Chinese people had reached America, in advance on Colombo, and for sure it wasn't the first time they mated with beautiful American women. Customs and features are the proof of those ancient intercourse.

In conclusion to the short report about Cipango: Let's not speak any longer about these lands and islands, since they are too far off our main topic and we have never been there. Too far off! Only some passages remained of these chronicles, astonishing for the way they were interpreted and later ignored. Censorships and interpretations should also be taken in account, within a certain margin of unavoidable randomness.

Any chance to identify Cipango with Japan is extremely remote. Japan from maps is shaped similarly to Antylia, and in the extreme comparison, to the modern Mexico. Antylia-Cipango was in the middle of the Atlantic, corresponding to the Antylia-Cipango of the Columbian oversea and the American new world.

That said, could Marco Polo have preceded, even virtually, Colombo? Was from *Il Milione* removed all that should not be told yet? In August 2007 the press reported that Marco Polo advanced Colombo's landing in America, as shown by a map, drawn by the Venetian,

currently in the library of the American congress. The document, donated in 1933 by the Italo-American Marcian Rossi, portrays a ship on the side of a map, showing a part of India, China, Japan, Eastern Indies and North-America, as the report by the then librarian tells. Called "Maps-with-ships", the map carries an emblem sketched under the ship, a combination of letters that gives the name Marco Polo. An analysis carried out in 1943 by FBI, involving the use of ultraviolet rays, highlighted the presence of three levels of ink; the map must have been altered at different stages through the time.

There is a chance therefore that Marco Polo was the first one to bring to Europe hints of the existence of the Americas. He would have reached the New World two centuries before Colombo, sketching the zone that separates Asia from America four centuries before it ever appeared on the European maps. The Venetian, when close to die, said: "I described the bare half of what I saw".

How far did the Venetian reach? Was his information from Chinese travels and landings? Everything strengthens the hypothesis of a Cipango that is America, having nothing to do with Japan. It's a misunderstanding that has gone on ever since, because of a three-card trick applied to geographical maps, and centuries of blindfolded interpretive approach.

Cipango-Antylia could be an island (after all the whole known world was an island) as well as a continent, or part of a continent. Even after its discovery, America will be mapped in single parts. By determining the extension of that land, the continent gains a shape. Antilya-Cipango was no island, but a piece of America instead, a piece of a whole that some remote sailor had already known.

Notice that the "ango" ending is frequent more in the languages of south America than of eastern Asia. It is especially linked to Mexican places (Durango, Quezaltenango, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, Chichicastenango...) but not only there. Today there is a town close to Mexico City, that is named Xipangu, and another one, not distant from Acapulco, named Chilpanchingo.

Gorgeous goldsmiths' masterpieces were recently found in northern Peru, in Sipan (or Xipan). In the tomb protecting the mummy of the "lord", a golden stick had been placed in the mouth of the dead, maybe the Andean equivalent of Charon's offering (see *Archeo*, n.4,

April 2001, De Agostini Rizzoli Periodici, p. 77). Chinese and Andean populations had this custom. The Chinese used to put in the mouth of the dead a coin, whereas the Andeans put gold and silver (Loayza Francisco A., *Los Chinos llegaron antes que Colon*, 1948, p. 160). Loayza considers the similar mortuary practices as an evidence of a commercial relation between Chinese and American Indians. Marco Polo spoke about pearls put in the mouth of the dead: "here it is used, before the burial, to put a pearl in the mouth of the dead". In the October 2006 issue of the *National Geographic*, an article entitled "Pyramid of Death" speaks about the existence of a mysterious civilization, older than the Aztecs, in the archeological zone of Teotihuacan, where the corpses in the tombs, dated to 300 B.C. are an enigma, some pearls filling the mouth of one of the victims of a human sacrifice. The lords in the region of Beregua - these being the words by Colombo regarding mortuary habits of the American natives -, when they die, bury their gold together with the body.

An indirect confirmation of an old false tradition comes from the works of the mixed-blooded Jesuit, Blas Valera, who named Colombo's three carvels as S. Mary, S. Clara, S. Jane (Giovanni was the name of Pope Cybo). Which travel did he refer to?

A recently discovered document gives another story about the conquest of Peru, different from the standard one. Blas Valera, son of a Spaniard and an Incas princess, being friendly to the Indians, was jailed and (falsely) accused of sexual abuse. Exiled to Spain, he was declared dead before his actual death, by the Company of Jesus, in order to prevent him from speaking again. Also in the following centuries, those who were seeking the truth faced physical elimination.

Valera secretly returned to Peru and wrote his work, "Nueva cronica y buen Gobierno" ("New Chronicles and good government", 1618). An Italian scholar, Laura Miccinelli, using the works of two other Jesuits and reading some the Inca "quipus" (knots and strings, mysterious heritage from that civilization), could then decipher a text of 1532 that claims the coming to the Americas of Tatars and, from the North, of white men with a golden beard, 10 centuries earlier: "About 10 centuries ago a group of ... brave wise men from wide Tartary ... met in the vast Southern Sea, the Pacific, of many islands ... They adapted themselves to the peaceful people they met, and generation after generation they reached the continent, where they found the lands inhabited by the constructors of great pyramids... in the south they fought against the warrior people of the coast, which ceased fighting

because they saw them as people from the north... of white complexion, thick hair and golden bearded faces.” (See Aimi Antonio, “Libri e ‘quipus’ di storia e segreti”, *Il Sole 24 ore*, 3 October 1999.)

The old Peruvian chronicles and Miccinelli’s findings are currently ignored, when not openly opposed by academic specialists, in spite of growing evidence in their favor. In this case, the discovery would bring us back to the age of Isidore of Seville and Cosma Indicopleuste or, possibly (from a comment by the editor Emilio Spedicato), to the time of the Justinian plague, which also affected China, when some people may have migrated to regions not affected by that immense disaster.

Once again people coming from Asia, and blond bearded men from north. Further arrivals, one thousand years and maybe more before Colombo: the Incas must be the result of this mix. Quipus preserved the truth, connecting the present explorers with wanderers lost in time. A reason more why the American natives couldn’t be anything but Indians. Colombo wasn’t wrong calling them in that way.

From lost scripts to globes, such as the one created by the Bohemian Martin Behaim, in Portugal, where Colombo landed after a shipwreck. The Admiral met Behaim and conferred with him; Behaim is considered one of Colombo’s inspirers. This scholar created in 1492 the first spherical globe. He had been visitor in Rome, the “Caput mundi”, where he met the geographer Toscanelli. (See Taviani Paolo Emilio, *Cristoforo Colombo: la genesi della grande scoperta*, De Agostini, Novara 1982, p. 133.) Behaim was a pupil of Regiomontano, a German astronomer disciple of Georg Peurbach. He was also a friend of cardinal Cusano, equally interested in the universe and a friend of Toscanelli. The erudite circle is wider and wider, and the net is tighter and tighter, but Rome and certain names are always included.

In Beheim’s original work, preserved in Nurnberg, Cipango is set in the Atlantic Ocean, between the Azores and the Asian continent, in an almost perfectly median position. Cipango would correspond well with Mexico. Such a correspondence appears curiously on the cover and back cover of a book published in 1992 regarding “Franciscans on Colombo’s track”.

Now a note from *Breve relazione del regno del Cile*, libro quarto, *dell’entrata de’ Spagnoli*

nel Regno del Cile, capitolo III, pp. 108-09: "because many authors believe those words in the Bible Chronicles chapt.9 (referring to Hiram, gold, Salomon and Ophir, n.d.a.) speak about the western Indies, interpreting the word Ophir as Peru or the whole America, and that the famous Colom was the first one to find out this, before the others; those tell that after he reached the Spanish island and that he repeatedly said that he landed on the sought-after Ophira". Other pages say that P. Francesco Vatablo added further details placing Ophir in Hispaniola (Santo Domingo n.d.a.), among the islands, and then Mexico and Peru on the continent.

The photocopied pages of the book are excerpts, if we remember correctly, of a tome exhibited in 1992 at the Lateran University in Rome, belonging to the personal collection of Pius IX, the Pope who first tried to canonize Colombo.

However, in Behaim's globe there is much more: a great island in the north, within a great archipelago, named Cathay. This one has nothing to do with China, i.e. with Marco Polo's Cathay. Was it Colombo's Cathay? Other bits of lands are scattered north and south of Cipango, in that intriguing spherical representation of the known world, and are part of a wide, limitless archipelago made up of unknown lands.

Colombo knew that these lands had to be part of a unique continent, like pieces of a puzzle gathering in a unique picture, with an isthmus separating the whole in two halves, according to a wrong and obsolete hypothesis, a knowledge suggested by ancient data and confirmed by maps and books in Alexandria. Was it a hypothesis? Research relies so often on hypothesis, considering as truth what sometimes is not. Research showed, with little doubt, that Cipango is the Chinese transcription of *Jik-pen-kuo*, albeit a famous geographer of the early years of the sixteenth century, the Dutch Johanne Ruysch, refused this hypothesis. (See Nebenzahl Kenneth, *Atlante di Colombo e le Grandi Scoperte*, Finmeccanica, Genoa 1991, p. 58.): "The 'Introduzione Geografica' of Ptolemy was the most widespread atlas in the first period of the great geographical discoveries, and was reprinted many times. The first edition after Colombo's journeys was published in Rome in 1507. Some copies included a revolutionary map of the new world produced by Johannes Ruysch."

The cartographer explains in the key to the map, that "a Spanish navigator reached this point, and because of its size, called the land 'New World'. As important as their effort was,

they were never able to explore it completely ... exploration cannot be completed until it's clear in which direction it will develop". This is an authoritative confirmation of the concept we expressed about the progressive mapping of new lands, based on experience.

The scholar, author of a map that doesn't show Japan, writes: "Marco Polo claims that ... there is a big island named Cipango, where the inhabitants worship idols and are ruled by a king... Their land is rich in gold and of any kind of stones. We believe that the island called by Spaniards as Hispaniola (the modern Haiti and Dominican Republic n.d.a.) is Cipango actually, because it matches the descriptions of Cipango, having idolatry in addition." (See Nebenzahl Kenneth, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59. An outsider scientist. But in the work, of which we mentioned the passage, Nebenzahl calls Ruysch "naïve"!)

The same about anthropophagy. The most important passage in the "Commentarios reales de los Incas" by Garcilaso de La Vega, says: "Father Blas Valera, considering Peru in ancient times and the sacrifices offered to the Father Sun, states: 'During their worship, the descendants used to sacrifice to the Sun great numbers of sheep and other animals, but never human beings, on contrary of what Polo and those who came after, falsely asserted'." (See De la Vega Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-28.)

The Venetian merchant, messenger of the Pope, in his way "Christo Ferens" at the court of the Great Khan, attributed in his book *Il Milione* sacrifices of human beings to Cipango, undoubtedly understood by Garcilaso as the Americas. Nevertheless we keep ignoring that the name and the territory identified by Colombo as the biblical Ophir and Tarsis didn't mean to indicate Japan, which, by the way, hadn't even been discovered, as we already observed. (See Lanciani Giulia, *Morfologie del viaggio, L'avventura marittima portoghese*, LED Edizioni universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, Milan 2006, p. 163.)

The discovery arrived in the second half of the XVI century, from Portuguese Fernão Mendes Pinto, a rare mix of merchant and corsair, of captain and survivor, sometimes rich sometimes poor. The chronicles of his wandering are a hot manuscript: in the long time between the writing and the publication (a 30-year-long quarantine), it was probably shortened and altered, because of the religious censorship and the Jesuits, and also for additional reasons. Among them the undeniable religious and racial tolerance (inspired by Erasmus) that led Mendes Pinto to declare that any individual is capable of fairness, dignity,

spirit of justice, regardless of the religion and race.

Also, it sounds so strange that he does not mention neither his religious experience in the Company of Jesus nor the reasons why he left, whether on purpose or forced by others. He was a voice against the crusades and triumphalism. He was a man who wasn't aligned, a universalist, in a trend that started a long time before, from Portugal, that had remained the untouched birthplace of Templarism.

On the other hand, Francesco Saba Sardi wrote in his comment to Garcilaso that Colombo discovered America in 1492, or rather, he "rediscovered America, because the context was new, modern. America became a land of settlements, exploitation and transformation, purposes very different from those of Vikings, Japanese and Polynesian navigators, Portuguese and African fishermen, and also people from Azores, who had landed on its shores along the centuries, sometimes creating settlements but giving no significant contributions to the local cultures." (See De la Vega Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, pp. LXIV-LXV.)

America was therefore well known. It was present, in books and maps. This has not been recognized, because of the claim that the new continent was, before 1492, totally unknown to the West and the whole world.

A precursor, Marco Polo, carrying a lamp with the oil from the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem and looking for an alliance with Tatars to fight Islam. A bringer of cross and Christ, Cristoforo Colombo, who wants to reach islands and over to proceed thereafter to Asia, to revive an old interrupted alliance pact, to eventually re-conquer the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

Two persons who, in spite of the centuries between them, were joined in a unique organized plan, though in a different way. The Church was behind this plan and the participants included missionaries and men from knight orders, all sharing an ideal vision, a never forgotten plan. Polo and Colombo were two explorers different from each other, looking for a Great Khan, who had gained attention and enchanted the countries with the fame of his power and nobility, and his plans for a "universal monarchy". He had become an allegoric character, a kind of political-eschatological metaphor. (See Cardini Franco, *op. cit.*, p. 94.)

What did Kubilay Khan say, and what was his message, sent through the Venetian ambassador?

“With his questions about the Pope and the Roman Church, and about Christians and Christian countries... “ he asked the Pope to send him a good number of priests (“even one hundred sages of the Christian law”), to “show explicitly to idolaters and other kinds of believers that their law was coming not from divine inspiration but from a totally different inspiration, a diabolic inspiration, like the idols they kept at home and worshipped; men, in other words, able to clearly show, with sound reasons, that the Christian law was superior.... At that point all the aristocracy will want to be baptized, and thereafter their citizens. At the end there will be more Christians here than in the western countries” (see Zorzi Alvise, *op. cit.*, pp.57-58.)

The baptism, to bring the redemption of the world, as Colombo desired. The whole world united, the good news spread all over the world, the apocalypse (or “Revelation”) available to the people, to put them in touch with the heavenly world: ideas, concepts, messages whose spread neither a merchant nor a sailor were able to be in charge of, especially in years in which public roles and social rankings were closely managed. Who was Marco Polo actually? Sometimes he appears as a phantom knight, only apparently a secular man, and, as Colombo, in charge of an important mission. What was in his lost book, beyond what we already know? His work was victimized, with its content of “wonders” and stories, by a fame, that mostly highlighted the aspects of the medieval exaggeration. As a result, the *Milione* turned out to be considered by historians as a sensational unreliable nonsense; historians that had carried out a purely literal analysis (whereas signs and symbols were keys to the marvelous), missed the value of a work that all those interested in explorations used to study carefully, like an updated and informative Bible on the far East and unknown lands.

The time distance between Polo’s and Colombo’s expeditions is not short, but only according to modern thinking. In that age the flow of years was slow, since the evolution of the ideas was slowed also by many obstacles, not to mention wars, famines, plagues, that contributed to hamper the “great plan”.

Standards were different than today. Time and distances were considered differently.

Colombo says that you could reach the other mainland sailing from Spain in a few days, which were actually 40 in his calculations. He was right, one month was nothing compared to his average journeys. We just need to think, how long lasted Marco Polo travel. One year sounds today like an era, but in those years it was like an instant. Hurry and acceleration are a typical phenomenon of the modern age.

The Renaissance was a ferment for revolutionary ideas, continuously restrained. Everywhere a physiological urge to mutation is evident, aimed to a reorganization of the world. In this context, if the renovation can't be stopped, when and how should mutation come? How long before the triumph over those who had tried to stop world-changing revolutions?

You just need to look at the upheaval event, after Colombo's discovery. It will take decades and centuries for the New World to be accepted; two hundred years (the time between Polo and Colombo) are a short time, in that past mindset.

Polo and Colombo are tightly bound by the invaluable presence of the Pope, beside the favorite readings of the sailor. The Pope had at his service missionaries, assistants, scientists and geographers with all their knowledge, organized in a real intelligence service. He could access to a continuous stream of news, like none else at that time. In spite of the imperialistic aims of emperors, khans or the Saladin, he was the real emperor.

The Great Kahn is calling. When will Rome answer? Only when possible: when there is certainty not to fail. The complexity of those years, famine, plague, the fragile balance of the world, are some of the reasons why a plan probably ready continued to be delayed. Or maybe, for a problem of heresy, that had to be tackled first and solved.

Marco Polo leaves his story to his heirs, and the Dominican Francesco Pipino re-elaborates it, removing passages that still sound unsafe, bringing together the protagonists of a story that will keep going on until Innocent VIII and Colombo. Why was the upsetting statement of Kubilay removed from the version of the Dominican monk? The Great Khan must have said to the Polos: "Four prophets are worshipped, and the whole world pays reverence to them", i.e. the Christians with Jesus, the Muslims with Mohammed, the Jewish with Moses, the Buddhists with Buddha, "and I pray and respect all four of them, and I pray the one that is

the main and most authentic." (See Zorzi Alvise, *op. cit.*, p. 55.)

A universalist mindset. Which will be reduced, with the evolution of history, to the three religions of the book (Buddha was considered as a Christian Saint), in a Trinitarian view, only to three great prophets. Which one is the "main and most authentic"?

This is the great topic, in common between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This is the great question, that will produce answers even from the scientific world. A scientific world which has been long claiming its presence-existence; a scientific world that means rationality. Faith and Church are (sometimes with good reasons) afraid of rationality. It takes little for the pure intellect, when stripped from the sacred, to get out of control. And if it will happen, the faith and even more the spirit will be blown away.

Kubilay was the new Alexander the Great, one of the frequent symbols of the early middle age. Gengis Khan's grandson, born from a Christian mother and married with a Christian wife, belonged to those that could "gather the whole world and rule it with concrete and fair law, protecting welfare, peace, commercial relations and safety of travels, on guarded routes...". A "leader", inspired by ambitions of effective government and universal brotherhood.

Consider now Polo Marco, *op. cit.* (2), pp. 40-41 (from the introduction of Maria Bellonci). According to Bellonci, Kubilay Khan "has a power over anything else, even over religion; nay, the power of moralizer of religion... His frank claim that good relations with any religions and respect for any church are the keys to the enlightened government, would surprise even Niccolò Machiavelli. Marco Polo sounds singularly judicious about religion... Though a really illiterate man (Colombo is supposed to be the same, n.d.a.), Marco, the only one in the world, was able to discover, in the challenge to know the unknown, the poetry at the base of the knowledge, the humbleness to perceive that men are different but also the same. His experience breaks the limits of space and time, and most of all frees us from limits inside us and almost makes real the ideal of brotherhood".

Marco Polo and Colombo, two related, unusual, great persons. They should have been more sensitive to the calls from material than spiritual sirens. They were singular, surrounded by the prevailing ignorance, "illiterates" that, however, hugely dictate and write. What's left of

their work is then modified, poor copies of their original writings. Everything might be true, everything might be false. Even later contributions may have falsified the truth, to make the texts less credible. Not to mention all the removed passages. Universalism, brotherhood, ideals, merchants, sailors, dealers of gold and precious stones, they have no problems in considering different worlds. The doors of the kings of the world are open to them.

Once the Chinese actor who played as the Great Khan in the 1980s TV series (directed by Alberto Lattuada, aired on RAI channels) was asked what he believed the message from Marco Polo was. He replied: "I would feel worried if he had left only one message. He left many. Marco Polo is different from other explorers: he didn't try to discover other lands, but to discover other people. Just think that Europe was supposed to be then the heart of the world, and the same was true for China. Marco Polo was somehow the inventor of détente between East and West, and the understanding of the countries." I must add that Cristoforo Colombo was influenced by a certain Marco Polo's "mindset of discovery", taking notes from the "Milione". (Polo Marco, *op. cit.* (1), p. 38). Sometimes actors see more clearly than historians.

Notice that the Polo's prologue "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, son of the true and living God, amen" was addressed (from a French document, in the National Library in Paris and not the partial version of monk Francesco Pipino) to «Seignors emperaor et rois, dux et marquois, cuens, chevaliers et b(o)rg(ois) e toutes gens» ("Emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, earls, knights and citizens and all the people"). Unusual statements for an illiterate merchant. Limitless ambition, boastfulness, haughtiness, or a message (not even a coded one) for those who could and should read beyond the wonders that decorate the story? Was the right moment coming, were the right persons? Maybe, but right moments need special circumstances, which did occur at Marco's time.

In Cardini Franco, *op. cit.*, p. 45, we read: "The first step, started in the middle of 13th century by the first council of Lyons, terminated in the early years of the second half of 1300, because of a number of reasons: the end of the Mongolian empire, the Chinese policy of isolation, the rise of the Ottoman power, which (between the Balkans and the Anatolian peninsula) interrupted or at least hampered many commercial routes between Europe and Asia, the striking experience of Tamerlane and the ruins he left in the devastated regions. The plague in years 1347-1350 started and aggravated the crisis in Europe, and negatively

affected the commerce; the early missionary wave, begun in the 40's of the thirteenth century (but already anticipated by Francesco's journey to Egypt and that saw the Mendicant Orders as protagonists) was at the end".

The broken process won't restart until the second half of 1400. There will be new, slow but continuous progress after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a kind of morning call for the West. Life or death? East or West? It will depend on who will be the first to reach the Eldorado of the America-Antylia-Cipango (where Chinese had landed centuries before).

The uncountable populations of the "three Indies" had to be brought to the Christian world, stopping Islam. The period set by God expired. The heavenly kingdom couldn't wait any more.

"The Crusades - Franco Cardini says - started a general feeling of 'pugna spiritualis', a warlike mood: on one side the Christian warriors, defenders of the Light, led by the knight Saints and the warrior angels, such as Saint George, Saint Jacques, the Archangel Michael; on the other side there was the army of darkness, monstrous and demoniac warriors conducted by infernal leaders". Alongside the road of the Light, Saint George, Saint Jacques together with the giant Saint Cristopher, ahead of them all.

Colombo joins up, takes his place, brings gifts of poor value: colored hats, marbles, rattles. Not acceptable if he were, as it is claimed, in the Asia discovered by Marco Polo, or Japan. His are gifts for plain folk, naïve people. The Indians themselves are easy and joyful, they swim to the boats with parrots, skeins of cotton, assegais. The encounter, as narrated by Colombo, sounds such a natural ritual, without amazement or fear on both sides, as if it were an old tradition. No astonishment, no quarrel, no scandal. As it happens to those who already know each other. "They walk naked, both men and women, as their mothers made them. The women are beautiful, with graceful bodies." The indios are "finely shaped, with lovely features... neither black nor white... they must be a gentle and smart people... I believe they could be easily evangelized... When I leave, I will bring with me six of them, to introduce to the Royal Highnesses, to make them learn to speak".

Bartolomeo De Las Casas, in his work "Historia de las Indias", defined Colombo as a good man and a good Christian. The works from the Dominican were altered as well, and even

published only in the second half of the 19th century. The author had asked his work not to be published before 40 years following his death. Why? What actually was in these texts so controversial?

Rome was therefore aware of the “otro mundo”. Only Rome owned the keys to open the doors, and only Rome was entitled to establish when and how, so that the Christian world wouldn’t be hurt, and the geographical heresy would be metabolized. The populace, the believers, as subjects of a kingdom or today’s citizens, need to be slowly prepared to radical changes in their view. All that can change the flow of history needs a progressive and shock-free maturation. When the change eventually starts, in a process of destruction-recreation, the man of the street will feel as if he had been aware of it for a long time, now mature and ready to the “revelation”. The events, as incredible as they are, will be accepted, with a release from the doubt.

To make this happen, one needs persons with qualities good enough to make, with commitment and secrecy, a positive outcome of the connection between what is unpredictable, or almost predictable, to what is predicted. These persons could be called “testers”, and there are few for each generation. Marco Polo was one of them. Colombo was one of them. They were two pre-discoverers of America.

The Chinese went to America, and Muslims had the same maps as Colombo. That America didn’t obey to the red book or kneel today towards Mecca, is thanks to one person. That the West won over atheism and over Islam, the credit goes only to “Christo Ferens”, Cristoforo Colombo.