

Marco Polo Research Past, Present, Future

This collective volume on Marco Polo's (1254-1324) travels attempts to integrate the fragmented research landscape by bringing together individual disciplines which usually work separately, like philology, comparative literature, text and reception history, Romance linguistics, as well as geography, anthropology, the history of religion, science, military, economics, etc. It is thus one of but a few works that go beyond singular aspects of Marco Polo's journey and his observations and thus shows that Polo's *Description of the World* is much more than just a travelogue.

The international contributors to this volume, who are leading scholars in their fields, make use of different, sometimes unique sources and thus help us better understand the Venetian's report and the times it was created, and also to verify and elucidate statements in the many versions and editions in which it came down to us. In addition, the essays published here are meant to be a contribution to the celebrations commemorating the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death.



Vogel / Theobald · Marco Polo Research: Past, Present, Future

Hans Ulrich Vogel and Ulrich Theobald (Eds.)

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**MARCO POLO RESEARCH:
PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**



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The Textual Transmission of the *Devisement dou monde*: Old Problems and New Insights

Alvise Andreose

The textual history of Marco Polo's *Devisement dou monde*, best known as *Milione*, is one of the most complex and intricate in medieval tradition.¹ After the research of Luigi Foscolo Benedetto,² there is no doubt that the original version of the text, the result of the cooperation between Marco Polo and Rustichello da Pisa during their incarceration in a Genoese prison in 1298, was written in “Franco-Italian”, the Italianised French used by Italian writers for chivalric, historical, didactic, moral, or religious works during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³ Benedetto's prolegomena to the critical edition of 1928⁴ – entitled *Introduzione. La tradizione manoscritta* – is devoted to the systematic examination of the manuscript transmission.⁵ In the first chapter,⁶ the Italian scholar identifies the ms. in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *français* 1116 (designated «F») as the best surviving witness of the *Devisement dou monde* from a linguistic point

¹ On the title *Milione*, by which the work is generally known in the Italian tradition, see Benedetto (1930a), (1930b). See also Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2017).

² Benedetto (1928a). See also Benedetto (1924), (1929), (1930c), (1932), (1959-1960).

³ On the use of this expression to indicate the language of the *Devisement dou monde*, see Andreose (2015b); Zinelli (2016), 229, 240, 255. Among the few scholars who still reject Benedetto's conclusion is Barbara Wehr, who has tried, without success, to prove that the *Devisement dou monde* was written originally not in Franco-Italian, but in Venetian, see Wehr (1993), (1999), (2001), (2004).

⁴ Benedetto (1928b).

⁵ Benedetto (1928a).

⁶ Benedetto (1928a), XI-XXXI.

of view. This codex is the only complete copy⁷ to preserve the language in which the work was originally written.⁸ The quality of its readings, however, does not seem to be as excellent. In Benedetto's view, it is a quite distant copy of the original, because it sometimes offers an erroneous or abridged text. In particular, the comparison with other witnesses of the book (which we shall examine in the following pages) led him to believe that F derives, through one or more intermediaries, from an exemplar that had lost a part of the original contents.⁹ That is why Benedetto chooses F as the base manuscript for his edition, but often corrects its readings on the basis of other authoritative witnesses and modifies its spelling to homogenise the form of the text.¹⁰ The successive editions by Gabriella Ronchi (1982) and Mario Eusebi (2010) reproduce the characteristics of the manuscript more faithfully.¹¹

In the chapters II-IV of his *Introduzione*, Benedetto examines three important versions of the *Devisement dou monde* that translate the text into different languages: into French («FG»), into Tuscan («TA»), and into a northern Italian variety («VA»).¹² Linguistic evidence suggests that they derive from Franco-Italian exemplars – indicated, respectively, as «F¹», «F²», and «F³» – which were very similar to F in contents and structure.¹³ Compared to the latter, they generally exhibit a more succinct and less reliable text, but sometimes they turn out to be useful for correcting its omissions and mistakes.

⁷ A fragment of four folios very similar to F was discovered by Chiara Concina about fifteen years ago and studied by herself and Philippe Ménard. See Concina (2007); Ménard (2012); Andreose, Concina (2016), 16-24. On this manuscript, see below.

⁸ The fragment contained in the ms. British Library, Cotton Otho D v, which Benedetto (1928a), XXXI-XXXIII, considered to be another witness of the Franco-Italian redaction, shows in fact Anglo-Norman linguistic features and does not display significant similarities to other manuscript families of the *Devisement dou monde*. See Ménard (2000), (2001), 69-70.

⁹ Benedetto (1928a), XXXI.

¹⁰ Benedetto (1928a), XXVIII-XXX; Ménard (2005), 407-408 n. 2.

¹¹ See Ronchi (1982); Eusebi (2010), (2018). The manuscript was first published by Roux de Rochelle (1824), 1-296.

¹² Benedetto (1928a), XXXIV-CXXXII.

¹³ Benedetto (1928a), XCIX.

The ancestor called «FG» by Benedetto is a rewriting into “good French” – that is to say, a fourteenth-century standard French, free of phono-morphological and lexical Italianisms – which was produced in France a few years after the composition of the work, between 1310 and 1312.¹⁴ It is transmitted by seventeen manuscripts, divided into three distinct subfamilies.¹⁵ According to a certainly authentic passage, attested only in a group of witnesses, this translation was made from a copy belonging to the French nobleman Thibaut de Chepoy. He had been sent into the Mediterranean by Charles de Valois, who was preparing an expedition in the Levant to claim his rights to the throne of Constantinople.¹⁶ In 1307, Thibaut was in Venice, where he received from Marco Polo «the first copy» (*la premiere coppie*) of the *Deisement dou monde* for his lord, which he then brought with him to France.¹⁷ The text published by Guillaume Pauthier in 1865¹⁸ on the basis of three manuscripts¹⁹ nowadays has been replaced by the critical edition founded on all extant witnesses that a team of scholars directed by Philippe Ménard issued between 2001 and 2009.²⁰ One of the most important findings of this editorial undertaking is the rectification of Benedetto’s view that FG would not be a simple translation of the original text, but a veritable reworking (*rimaneggiamento*), attributable to a certain «Grégoire» who is mentioned in the table of contents of two manuscripts. Ménard has proved, however, that this Grégoire was a mere copyist and the French version corresponds *mot à mot* to that attested in

¹⁴ See Ménard (2005), 420: «La version française a dû être confectionnée sans doute en 1310-1311. Nous avons un *terminus a quo*: le retour de Thibaut à Paris en 1310 et un *terminus ante quem*: la date de novembre 1312 où, dans les comptes de Mahaut d’Artois, il est fait mention de sommes versées à trois enlumineurs pour un *roman du Grant Khan*». Cf. also Ménard (1998), 345-348; (2001), 27. Benedetto (1928a), LX, though, had assumed that FG was accomplished in 1308.

¹⁵ See Benedetto (1928a), XXXIV-LXXV; Ménard (2001), 40-69. Benedetto knew only fifteen manuscripts.

¹⁶ Ménard (2001), 24-27; (2005), 419-420.

¹⁷ Ménard (2001), 115.

¹⁸ Pauthier (1865).

¹⁹ Paris, BnF, fr. 2810, 5631, 5649.

²⁰ Ménard (2001-2009). I may also mention the edition by Badel (1998), based on a single manuscript.

F.²¹ For this reason, the acronym «FG» was shelved in favour of «Fr», which is now used in Marco Polo studies.²²

The Tuscan translation «TA» was made in the first half of the fourteenth century²³ from a model very close to F, and circulated especially in a merchant milieu.²⁴ It is represented by five fourteenth-century manuscripts, preserving the text in its original linguistic form,²⁵ and by a Latin translation dating back to the same century, known as «LT».²⁶ The latter, however, contaminates the text of TA with that of the Latin version by Francesco Pipino.²⁷

The Tuscan translation was edited for the first time by Giovanni Battista Baldelli Boni in 1827 on the basis of the manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale II, IV, 88.²⁸ This choice depended essentially on the alleged antiquity of the codex²⁹ and its linguistic features, which led Baldelli Boni to consider it as «l'Ottimo» ('the Best') among the Tuscan

²¹ Ménard (1998), 348-351; (2001), 28-31.

²² In the last chapter of the *Introduzione*, devoted to hard-to-classify witnesses, Benedetto (1928a), CCI-CCX, also deals with the Catalan translation «K», which is preserved by three manuscripts written in three different languages: Catalan, Aragonese, French. This is an abridged version, which does not play an important role in establishing the critical text. The Catalan and Aragonese witnesses have been published respectively by Gallina (1958) and Nitti (1980). A philological study of the K family and a "critical" translation into modern French have recently been provided by Reginato (2022), who has confirmed the idea expressed by Benedetto (1928a), CCX, that the Catalan version is derived from a source close to Fr.

²³ Cf. Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), XV. On this question see the summary of Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 29-30.

²⁴ Benedetto (1928a), LXXX, XCIX; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 325.

²⁵ Cf. Benedetto (1928a), LXXX-LXXXIV. It should be remembered, in addition, that a large selection of chapters from TA was included by the Florentine writer Antonio Pucci within his *Libro di varie storie*. See Benedetto (1928a), LXXXV-LXXXIX; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 333-335.

²⁶ See Benedetto (1928a), LXXXIV-LXXXV; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 325-337; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 31-35. LT was published by Roux de Rochelle (1824), 297-494. Santoliquido (2019) prepared a new edition as his doctoral dissertation under the direction of Eugenio Burzio.

²⁷ On Pipino's translation, see below.

²⁸ Baldelli Boni (1827).

²⁹ According to a late annotation (1458), the manuscript would have been copied before 1309, but a number of scholars have raised doubts about this date. See Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 328-329; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 29.

witnesses of the work.³⁰ The same text was published – with small changes – by Adolfo Bartoli in 1863 and Dante Olivieri in 1912 and 1928.³¹ A critical edition based on all extant manuscripts was published by Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso in 1975. In this book, the text is accompanied by an important commentary (*Indice ragionato*) by Giorgio Raimondo Cardona.³²

The translation «VA» was produced at the beginning of the fourteenth century, certainly before 1322 (and perhaps before 1314), in North-Eastern Italy.³³ It often offers a concise text, characterised by several omissions, so that it proves to be less useful than Fr and TA to ameliorate the text represented by F.³⁴ The critical edition issued by Alvaro Barbieri and myself in 1999 is basically founded on the ms. in Padua, Biblioteca Civica, CM 211, which was copied in 1445 by the Venetian nobleman Niccolò Vitturi.³⁵ Despite its relatively late date, this codex is the best among the four witnesses transmitting the text of VA in its original linguistic form. Although Benedetto, relying on previous studies,³⁶ spoke of «redazione veneta» ('Venetian redaction' or, more precisely, 'Venetan redaction'), the linguistic analysis of the manuscripts occupying the highest positions on the stemma – particularly of the fragment contained in the ms. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 3999 (first half of the fourteenth century) – nevertheless reveals that VA circulated in Emilia and Lombardy in earliest times, but not in Veneto.³⁷ That is why it is more appropriate to designate this version as «North-Eastern Italian» or «Northern Italian».

³⁰ See Baldelli Boni (1827), vol. I, VII. This designation, as demonstrated by Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 340-342, was created by Apostolo Zeno.

³¹ Bartoli (1863); Olivieri (1928a).

³² See Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994); Cardona (1994). The edition by Bertolucci Pizzorusso is based essentially on the ms. Florence, BNC, II, IV, 136.

³³ This date can be deduced from the fact that the Latin translation P, which was made from an exemplar of VA, was made before 1322 (or 1314). See below.

³⁴ On VA, see Benedetto (1928a), C-CXXXII; Barbieri (1999); Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 37-61.

³⁵ Barbieri, Andreose (1999).

³⁶ I.e. those of Olivieri (1904-1905), (1908) and Pelaez (1906). See Andreose (2002), 663-664.

³⁷ See Andreose (2002), and particularly the observations of Andreose (2016b), 237-238: «È da notare [...] che dei quattro rami in cui si articola lo *stemma* della famiglia, soltanto uno presenta in una posizione relativamente alta testimoni di origine veneta: il ms. CM 211 della Biblioteca Civica di Padova (= VA³, 1445), il 557 della Burgerbibliothek di Berna (VA⁵, sec. XVI in.) e il perduto codice appartenuto al marchese Ippolito Venturi Ginori Lisci (VA⁴, sec. XV in.),

VA is the family of witnesses that generated the greatest number of descendants. At a very early stage, it was turned into Latin twice. The most ancient translation (known as «P») was made by the Dominican friar Francesco Pipino da Bologna after 1310 and before 1322 (or, perhaps, before 1314).³⁸ The second one (known as «LB») was made before 1333-1334, presumably in Lombardy.³⁹ Furthermore, there exists a Tuscan adaptation, «TB», preserved by seven manuscripts,⁴⁰ which in the fifteenth century gave birth to another Latin translation («LA») and a German version.⁴¹ A collateral of TB is at the origin of a wide group of witnesses⁴² that includes five manuscripts and a series of early editions dating back to the fifteenth-

dipendenti tutti e tre da un unico capostipite. Il testimone più antico di tale ramo, il Riccardiano 1924 (VA², sec. XIV m.), non è però veneto, ma quasi sicuramente lombardo. Da un collaterale di VA² discende poi la versione toscana TB, da cui deriva a sua volta la versione latina LA. Gli altri tre rami sono costituiti da un frammento recante evidenti tratti linguistici bolognesi (il ms. 3999 della Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma, VA¹, della metà del sec. XIV), dalla redazione latina del frate bolognese Francesco Pipino (P, p. 1310, a. 1322) e dalla redazione latina LB (a. 1333-1334 [...]). Quest'ultima [...] pare aver circolato soltanto in Lombardia e potrebbe essere originaria di tale area. Tutto induce a ritenere, dunque, che la versione VA sia giunta nel Veneto abbastanza tardi (sec. XV). La sua diffusione a Venezia non è documentata prima del 1445, data di VA³. [...] [S]ono soltanto due le copie sicuramente esemplate nella città lagunare – VA³ e il ms. 1296 della Biblioteca Statale di Lucca, che si colloca nei piani bassi dello *stemma* della famiglia».

³⁸ See Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 64-67, and also Dutschke (1993), 216-220. Since the *Liber* is mentioned in another work by Pipino, the *Chronicon*, which basically tells of events that occurred by the year 1314, numerous scholars consider this date as the *terminus ad quem*, see Manzoni (1894-1895), 269-270; Zaccagnini (1935-1936), 69-70; Reichert (1997), 174 n. 123 and 125, 239-240; Ménard (2017), 202-203. The final sections of the *Chronicon*, however, mention facts which happened in 1316, 1317, 1322, see Dutschke (1993), 218. For a critical survey of the various hypotheses see *ibid.*, 216-220; Grisafi (2014), 46-48.

³⁹ See Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 43-45, 178-179, 210. It should be noted, however, that this *terminus ad quem* is not certain. Cf. Andreose (2016b), 237 n. 23.

⁴⁰ Benedetto (1928a), CV-CVIII, knew only six manuscripts. The seventh was identified by Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 325-326. See also Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 45-47.

⁴¹ This translation appears in the *editio princeps* of Marco Polo's book, printed by Friedrich Creussner in Nuremberg in 1477, see Benedetto (1928) CXIV-CXIX; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 48-49. LA, too, circulated in Germany and was translated into German during the first half of the fifteenth century. See *ibid.*, 59-61.

⁴² See Benedetto (1928a), CXXIV-CXXXI; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1983); Valentinetti Mendi (1992), 91-115; Gobbato (2010); Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 40-43.

sixteenth centuries, among which the most important is the Spanish translation by Rodrigo Fernández de Santaella printed in Sevilla in 1503.⁴³

The Latin translation P, whose original title is *Liber de conditionibus et consuetudinibus orientalium regionum*, is the subject of a separate chapter of Benedetto's introduction.⁴⁴ It is attested by over sixty manuscripts, according to the most recent accounts.⁴⁵ Without a doubt, it was the version of Marco Polo's book that met with the greatest success during the Middle Ages, because it mainly circulated among churchmen and scholars.⁴⁶ In the prologue, Pipino claims to have undertaken the translation by order of his superiors. His work, he adds immediately, was inspired by the desire to adapt the text linguistically and stylistically to the taste of a wider and more educated readership than that to which the work originally was addressed. Moreover, he expresses the intention to provide his audience with a religious interpretation of some passages of the book.⁴⁷ The most relevant changes from the original version are the division of the contents into three books, homogeneous in length, and the introduction into the text of judgments condemning the oriental beliefs and practices contrary to Christian doctrine. Furthermore, the translation shows a certain tendency to group together the information more rationally, following a trend already visible in its source VA.

Because of the vast and complex textual tradition, a critical edition of P based on all extant manuscripts is still missing, even though attempts at classifying the various redactions have been made by Consuelo Wager Dutschke and Christine Gadrat-Ouerfelli.⁴⁸ Over a century ago, Justin

⁴³ The bibliography on this translation is very extensive. For further information one should consult the fundamental studies by Gil (1987) and Cátedra (2006). See particularly the critical edition by Angélica Valentinetti Mendi (2008), who also publishes the Italian manuscript used by Santaella (Sevilla, Biblioteca Colombina, Sala Cristóbal Colón, ms. 11).

⁴⁴ On Pipino's translation, see especially Dutschke (1993); Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 63-94; Ménard (2017).

⁴⁵ Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 384-385, Burgio, Simion (2018), 174-175 n. 8

⁴⁶ The success of Pipino's version continued into the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. See Benedetto (1928a), CXLIX-CLIII, and Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 86-91. Among the translations, the Portuguese version published in Lisbon in 1502 by the German typographer Valentim Fernandes deserves particular mention. On this redaction see Pereira (1922).

⁴⁷ Benedetto (1928a), CLIV. See also Simion (2015a), *Prefazione* 1-3.

⁴⁸ Dutschke (1993), 245-261; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 71-86.

Václav Prášek edited, at the foot of the Czech translation, the version transmitted by the ms. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Vindobonensis Latinus 50 (then in Vienna), and recorded the variants from two manuscripts in Prague and from P's *editio princeps* (Gouda, 1483-1484) in the apparatus.⁴⁹ In recent times, Samuela Simion has published the edition of the text contained in the ms. Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 983.⁵⁰

The penultimate chapter of the *Introduzione* is devoted to a group of witnesses that, in Benedetto's view, would prove the existence of a textual «phase prior to F» (*fase anteriore a F*) and the other families considered up until now.⁵¹ Benedetto starts by examining the most famous post-medieval version of Marco Polo's book, the Italian translation published by Giovanni Battista Ramusio in the *Secondo volume delle Navigazioni e viaggi* (Venezia, 1559).⁵² This redaction, known as «R», contains many variations and additions compared to F. In attempting to detect its sources, Benedetto identified a small but significant number of versions that often offer better readings than F and the related families Fr, TA, VA. The most important among these is the Latin translation «Z», which has a shortened text in some chapters, but in others displays supplementary contents of undoubted authenticity. Accordingly, the hypothesis is proposed that this redaction depends on a Franco-Italian exemplar that was more complete and correct than that from which F Fr TA VA derive.⁵³ Although the only extant witness of Z – the manuscript in the Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares de Toledo, Zelada 49.20⁵⁴ – was copied around 1450-1460,⁵⁵ numerous pieces of evidence suggest that the translation was made in the first four decades of the fourteenth century, presumably in the first quarter.⁵⁶ Benedetto, who first discovered this version and recognised its

⁴⁹ Prášek (1902). See Dutschke (1993), 237.

⁵⁰ Simion (2015a).

⁵¹ Benedetto (1928a), CLVIII-CC.

⁵² Ramusio (1559), 2r-60r. See also Milanese (1978-1988), vol. III, 7-297; Simion (2015b).

⁵³ Benedetto (1928a), CLXIII-CLXXIII. This theory will be discussed in the following pages.

⁵⁴ See the description of the manuscript in Barbieri (1998), 578-580.

⁵⁵ Mascherpa (2007-2008), 15-18.

⁵⁶ A *terminus ad quem* may be deduced from the works of the Dominican friars Pietro Calò da Chioggia and Filippino da Ferrara, which contain extracts from Z, see Benedetto (1928a), CCXIV-CCXVI; (1959-1960), 573-575; Dutschke (1993), 1227-1259; Amadori (1998);

relevance, did not take the text from the Toledo manuscript, which he did not know, but from a direct copy, commissioned in 1795 by the *abbé* Giuseppe Toaldo (1719-1797), professor of geography and astronomy at the University of Padua, and now preserved at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.⁵⁷ The Zelada codex was localised in 1932 by the British collector and savant Sir Percival David, who was searching for it on behalf of Arthur Christopher Moule.⁵⁸ The latter could thereby publish the transcription of the Toledan manuscript in the second volume of his edition of Marco Polo's book issued in 1938, which is also signed by Paul Pelliot.⁵⁹ Over the past three decades, the increasing interest in Z's version stimulated several investigations, culminating in the critical edition prepared by Alvaro Barbieri (1998)⁶⁰ and the studies by Giuseppe Mascherpa, which examine all witnesses directly or indirectly related to this redaction.⁶¹

A part of the additional materials that distinguish Z from F Fr TA VA is also shared by the versions «L» and «V». The former is a Latin compendium, preserved by six manuscripts,⁶² which was made from a Franco-Italian model⁶³ in the fourteenth century (before 1372). L remained unpublished for a long time and only recently has been published in electronic

Mascherpa (2008); Gobbato (2015); Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 96, 167-173, 179-180. Calò's *Legendae* were composed after 1330-1332 and before 1340, see Poncelet (1910), 31; Devos (1948), 258. Filippino's *Liber de introductione loquendi* was written after 1325 and before 1347, see Dutschke (1993), 1228-1229. For these texts, see also below.

⁵⁷ Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. Y 160 sup.

⁵⁸ Barbieri (1998), 569-573; (2004c), 58-59; (2016), 37-42. In the same year, the manuscript was also identified by the American scholar James Homer Herriott (1937).

⁵⁹ Moule, Pelliot (1938), vol. II. In fact, the volumes containing the critical translation and Z's edition were produced solely by Moule. The commentary of Pelliot (1959-1973) appeared posthumously as a separate publication.

⁶⁰ Barbieri (1998).

⁶¹ Mascherpa (2007-2008), 15-18; (2008); (2017); (2018); (2024).

⁶² Burgio, Mascherpa (2007), 133; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 102-103, 404; Buzzoni et al. (2016), 656-657; Burgio (2018), 69-70 n. 2. Benedetto (1928a), CLXXVIII-CLXXX, knew only four manuscripts.

⁶³ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXVIII-CLXXXI; Burgio (2018).

form by Eugenio Burgio,⁶⁴ who is currently preparing the critical edition.⁶⁵ Although it is usually thought to be written in Veneto on the basis of linguistic clues,⁶⁶ its language does not exhibit characteristics specific to this area, but only general features of northern Italian varieties.⁶⁷ The study of its textual transmission reveals that it circulated in Ferrara (in Emilia-Romagna) and Padua (in Veneto) at an earlier time, and spread to Flanders in the fifteenth century.⁶⁸

The Venetian version V is transmitted by a single fifteenth-century codex (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 424). Although its text is disfigured by frequent corruptions and misunderstandings, Benedetto proved that its source was an authoritative manuscript, occupying a very high position on the stemma.⁶⁹ The in-depth analyses conducted by Samuela Simion⁷⁰ have confirmed Benedetto's hypothesis that V derives from a «Latin translation of a Franco-Italian text».⁷¹

According to Benedetto's interpretation, the Italian translation by Rasmusio («R») resulted from the collation of five different texts.⁷² P served as the principal model in terms of contents, style and book structure.⁷³ A second source that also played a key role in the text's construction was a Latin witness belonging to Z's family, now lost, which is to be identified with the codex «of wonderful antiquity» (*di maravigliosa antichità*) that

⁶⁴ Burgio (2015). At the end of her volume on the medieval transmission and reception of Marco Polo's book, Christine Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 404-413, gives the first seven chapters of L on the basis of the codex Venice, Museo Civico Correr, 2408, and has recorded variants from four other manuscripts in the apparatus.

⁶⁵ Buzzoni et al. (2016), 655-660.

⁶⁶ Burgio, Mascherpa (2007), 144-146; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 102-103; Burgio (2018), 70 n. 5.

⁶⁷ Burgio, Mascherpa (2007), 142-147; Burgio (2018), 77-78. See also Andreose (2016b), 242.

⁶⁸ Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 103-105, 404-411.

⁶⁹ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXIII-CLXXVIII.

⁷⁰ Simion (2007-2008); (2011), 33-37; (2019), 68-72, 79-110. On this subject, see below.

⁷¹ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXVII-CLXXVIII.

⁷² Cf. Benedetto (1928a), CLVIII-CXCIII, particularly CLXII, CLXXXVII-CXCIII. Research carried out by a team of scholars directed by Eugenio Burgio between 2009 and 2015 confirmed and clarified Benedetto's conclusions. See Burgio (2011), VII-XXXVI; Andreose (2015a).

⁷³ Benedetto (1928a), CLXII («base originaria e principale, per la sostanza e per lo stile e per la squadratura dell'opera»).

Ramusio claims to have borrowed from a Venetian nobleman of the Ghisi family in the prologue to his translation.⁷⁴ Textual evidence shows that this source – designated by Benedetto as «Z¹» – offered a more correct and complete text than the one attested in the Zelada codex, so that the testimony of R turns out to be of fundamental importance for reconstructing the shape of the original Z.⁷⁵ Benedetto identifies two other sources of Ramusio in the versions L and V, even though their influence on the translation seems to be smaller than that of P and Z.⁷⁶ A more significant contribution was given by the Venetian translation «VB»,⁷⁷ preserved by three fifteenth-century manuscripts and a sixteenth-century fragment⁷⁸ but presumably dating back to the previous century,⁷⁹ which features various interpolations and additions. Its text – now available thanks to Pamela Gennari's edition⁸⁰ – derives basically from a source similar to F, though some readings indicate sporadic contact with Z.⁸¹

Several passages in the *Introduzione* express the idea that F and the families of manuscripts offering a similar text in terms of contents and structure (Fr TA VA) depend on a common source that had lost some of the original data,⁸² which are instead preserved in Z and, to a lesser extent, in L and V.⁸³ Benedetto's opinion about the genealogical relations between these three versions, however, is more nuanced. At first, he claims that Z V L form «a single group» compared to F Fr TA VA,⁸⁴ within which V

⁷⁴ Milanese (1978-1988), vol. III, 32 n. 1. See also Ramusio (1559), 7r; Simion (2015b), *Prefazione* 68.

⁷⁵ Benedetto (1928a), CLXVII-CLXIX. See also Benedetto (1940).

⁷⁶ The results of Benedetto (1928a), CLXXVIII, CLXXXI, were refined by Burgio (2011), XXIX-XXXIII (par. by A. Andreose), XXVI-XXIX (par. by P. Gennari and E. Burgio).

⁷⁷ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXVIII-CXCI. See Burgio (2011), XXXIII-XXXVI (par. by A. Andreose).

⁷⁸ Andreose (2018-2019).

⁷⁹ Simion (2018), 110-113.

⁸⁰ Gennari (2008-2009); (2015).

⁸¹ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII-CLXXXVII; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 107-109.

⁸² Benedetto (1928a), LXXX, XCIX, CXIII, CC, CXX ff.

⁸³ Benedetto (1928a), CLVIII. See also *ibid.*, CLXXXII, CC.

⁸⁴ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII: «Z, V, L costituiscono, di fronte alle famiglie studiate nei precedenti capitoli, un unico gruppo. Oltre alle numerose novità che hanno, come vedemmo, in comune, si consideri la loro concordia in certe lezioni tipicamente differenziali rispetto a F

and L represent a «distinct subgroup».⁸⁵ Immediately afterwards, though, he argues that Z V L presuppose a Franco-Italian text, which looked, overall, like F in style and order but presented, in some places, a considerably richer text, and maintains that V and L derive «independently from each other» from an intermediate textual phase between the «primitive form» attested by the Toledan manuscript and Z¹ (= R) and «that preserved today by F».⁸⁶ This idea springs from the observation that V and L share some, probably original, variants with Z, but lack most of the *addenda* that distinguish the Zelada codex and Ramusio's translation from the rest of the *Devisement's* witnesses.⁸⁷

From a theoretical point of view, the pages devoted to the relationships between Z V L, which are so important to the reconstruction of the early stages of the manuscript transmission and, accordingly, the establishment of the critical text, are also the weakest of the whole introduction. Benedetto's lack of familiarity with the principles of Lachmann's method emerges not only from the contradictions within his argument, but especially from his failure to distinguish between “agreement in error” and “agreement in exact reading”.⁸⁸ Although it is true, at least in principle, that the theory of the progressive impoverishment of the original text⁸⁹ could account for the existence of two groups of families, respectively L V

[...]. Anche esaminati individualmente, *V* e *L* mostrano il loro stretto rapporto con *Z*, non solo pei nuovi passi comuni già segnalati, ma anche per caratteristiche coincidenze testuali».

⁸⁵ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII: «*V* e *L* costituiscono a loro volta, di fronte a *Z* e *Z*¹, un sottogruppo distinto. Più che la comunanza di certe novità non attestate altrimenti e l'evidenza di certe consonanze formali, ce ne persuade l'analogo impoverimento del contenuto: manca ad entrambi la maggior parte dei passi che fanno il pregio caratteristico di *Z* e *Z*¹. Né si tratta soltanto di soppressioni. La materia in questione vi appare ridotta a fuggevoli cenni, ad enigmatici echi».

⁸⁶ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII (see also CC).

⁸⁷ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII: «la ricchezza del testo su cui fu compiuta la versione latina oggi attestata da *Z* e da *R* [...], probabilmente assai vicina all'integrità originaria, si trova quasi identicamente ridotta negli attuali *V* e *L*».

⁸⁸ See the remarks by Barbieri (2004c), 62: «Benedetto non ha proposto uno *stemma* per i piani alti della tradizione poliana. Bisogna del resto tenere presente che A e B non sono famiglie di manoscritti nel senso vero e proprio della parola. Una rigorosa classificazione genealogica, visualizzata da uno schema di filiazione, è dunque possibile solo per le singole redazioni. Per questa ragione, Benedetto ha dato soltanto due *stemmata* parziali: per la versione oitanica trentesca FG e per la versione veneto-emiliana VA».

⁸⁹ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII, CC.

and F Fr TA VA, which would reflect two different textual forms, the fact remains that the presence of authentic readings in Z V L not found in any other manuscript has no “conjunctive” value and does not suffice to prove their kinship, unless one admits that the author introduced changes into the first draft of his book at a later date – an hypothesis that Benedetto firmly rejects as «not necessary nor useful», though «abstractly more than legitimate». ⁹⁰ The Italian scholar not only will not correct this fallacious argument in his successive studies of Marco Polo’s book, but will even formalise it into the theory of a bipartite tradition.

The idea that the *Deisement*’s witnesses divide into two groups, «A» and «B», whose ancestors derive from a corrupted archetype (O¹), is presented by Benedetto for the first time in an essay published in 1929,⁹¹ with which he replies to the sharp criticism of his critical edition advanced by Giulio Bertoni.⁹² He finally adopts this classification in the prologue of the “critical translation” of Marco Polo’s book which appeared in 1932.⁹³ Even though, as said above, the idea of a bifid stemma does not emerge clearly from the 1928 introduction, which is doubtless the fundamental reference point for the *Deisement*’s textual state, it met immediately with considerable success. It was already referred to in a review-article by Mario Casella published in 1929⁹⁴ and was quoted afterwards in a number of general overviews to illustrate Benedetto’s conclusions.⁹⁵ In actuality, this model proves to be inadequate for the description of his conception of the earliest stages of the manuscript transmission and especially seems to be too reductive compared to the more complex reality of the data.

⁹⁰ Benedetto (1928a), CXCIX.

⁹¹ Benedetto (1929), 17-18, 23, 59.

⁹² Bertoni (1928).

⁹³ Benedetto (1932), XXI-XXII (for more on this issue, see below). Benedetto refers to the division of the manuscript transmission into two main branches also in later studies, see e.g. Benedetto (1959-1960), 526.

⁹⁴ Casella (1929), 200 n. 1.

⁹⁵ Terracini (1933), 372-375; Moule, Pelliot (1938), vol. I, 41; Larner (1999), 4, 58, 185; Barbieri (1998), 568-569; (2004c), 52-56; (2004b), 140-141, 146; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 16-109. See also Battaglia Ricci (1992), 86 n. 6; Reichert (1997), 169-180.

The real existence of the B-group is one of the points of Benedetto's *recensio* that raises the most serious questions. The notion of the connection between L V Z is not deduced from common errors, but from the fact that all three share some additions which are missing from the remaining families F Fr TA VA. This supplementary material consists of single expressions, phrases or short sentences that appears to be original and, for this reason, cannot be considered as *Bindefehler*. Apart from these brief additions, L and V offer the same text as the A-group, so, in the following studies, the idea gained weight that the Toledan manuscript – which we will designate as «Z» according to a consolidated tradition – and Z¹, one of the main sources of R, derive from an exemplar very close to the Franco-Italian original, and the other versions were produced through a progressive reduction of the original text. It should be remembered that, in two papers which appeared in 1929 and 1930, the above-mentioned Mario Casella and the classical philologist Aurelio Peretti insisted on the authenticity of the adjunctive information passed on by the Zelada codex and, to a lesser extent, by the Ramusian translation.⁹⁶ Furthermore, both scholars excluded that these variants were added by Marco Polo after his return to Venice, reiterating a conviction that already was expressed by Benedetto.⁹⁷ The latter in 1932 published an Italian translation of the *Devisement dou monde* that was based on the presupposition that Z and R depend on a source nearer to the original than any other manuscript.⁹⁸ In the 1928's critical edition, Benedetto reported the *addenda* of Z¹ and R only in the apparatus,⁹⁹ but, four years later, he attempted a reconstruction of the original contents of the book, integrating texts written in different languages into the Italian translation. That is why this work is usually referred to as a “critical translation”.¹⁰⁰ The same solution was adopted, some time later, by Arthur Christopher Moule in the English translation contained in

⁹⁶ Casella (1929); Peretti (1930).

⁹⁷ Benedetto (1928a), CXCVIII-CXCIX.

⁹⁸ Benedetto (1932).

⁹⁹ Benedetto (1928a), CC, CXX-CXXI. See also Barbieri (2016), 32-33.

¹⁰⁰ Barbieri (2016), 35-37.

the first volume of his edition which appeared in 1938.¹⁰¹ The discovery of the Toledan manuscript, which took place in 1932, as seen above, allowed him to confirm Benedetto's hypothesis about the antiquity of Z and, at the same time, to base his text on a more authoritative exemplar than the eighteenth-century copy used by the Italian scholar.¹⁰²

In 1933, the Italian linguist Benvenuto Terracini issued an article bearing the significant title *Ricerche e appunti sulla più antica redazione del Milione* ('Research and notes on the earliest redaction of the *Milione*').¹⁰³ Building on the conclusions of Benedetto's analysis and taking advantage of Casella's and Peretti's contributions, Terracini proposed a more precise classification of the witnesses occupying the highest positions on the stemma. He developed the idea – already suggested (albeit vaguely) by Benedetto¹⁰⁴ – that the group composed by Z and R (which he indicates with «Z¹»)¹⁰⁵ forms an isolated branch of the tradition and that the remaining versions, including L and V, represent different stages in a progressive impoverishment of the original text. In his view, the A-branch does not derive from the original or from an archetype, but depends on a sub-archetype offering an abridged version of the original draft (this sub-archetype

¹⁰¹ Moule, Pelliot (1938), vol. I. On Moule's edition see Benedetto (1939); Barbieri (2016), 40-43.

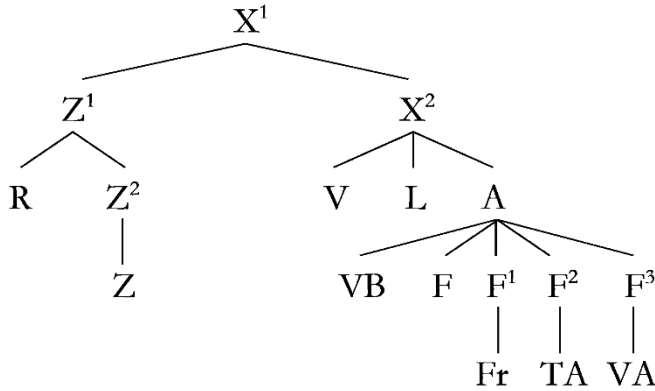
¹⁰² Without diminishing the importance of the discovery, it should be noted that the diplomatic edition of Moule did not represent a substantial improvement on Benedetto's text, since Toaldo's copy proved to be very faithful to its model.

¹⁰³ Terracini (1933).

¹⁰⁴ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXXII, CC. See the observations by Casella (1929), 215: «la divisione di due famiglie A e B, nata da una necessità di chiarezza espositiva e determinata dalla volontà di isolare, nella storia della propagazione del testo, la questione ramusiana, serve a documentare che siamo alla presenza di una molteplicità di redazioni, varie di contenuto, più o meno affini, più o meno conservative, ma tutte risalenti a un apografo franco-italiano incompleto ed errato».

¹⁰⁵ As said above, the same abbreviation is used by Benedetto to indicate the «Ghisi» codex, that is to say the exemplar of the Z family that served as a source for Ramusio's translation. See Benedetto (1928a), CLXVIII-CLXIX.

is designated as «X²»). For representing the relationships between the main redactions, Terracini drew the following figure:¹⁰⁶



In Terracini's view, the text reduction would have taken place in two stages: in the ancestor «X²», the alleged source of L, V and A; and in A, which would be at the origin of VB, F and the Franco-Italian exemplars F¹, F², F³, from which Fr, TA, VA derive respectively.¹⁰⁷

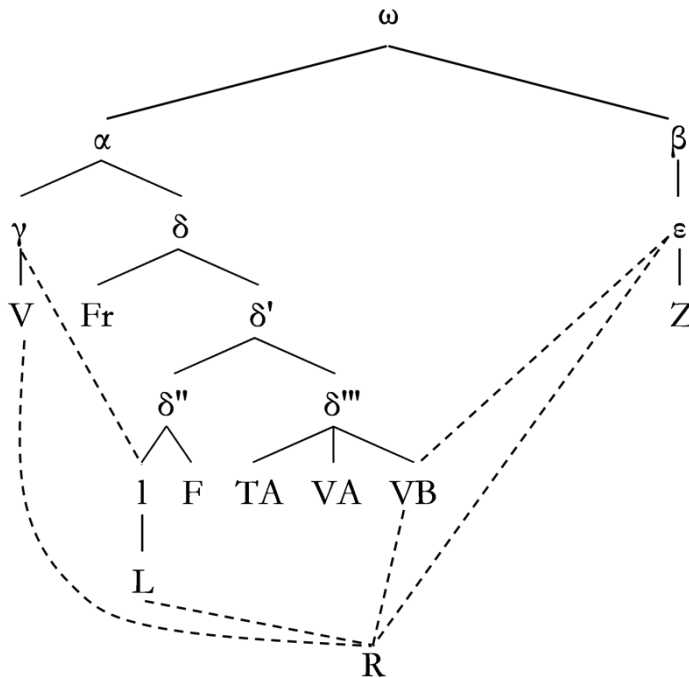
The idea that there existed two textual stages between the archetype and F Fr VA TA was adopted and developed by Eugenio Burgio and Mario Eusebi, who, in a major paper published in 2008, re-examined the textual transmission of the *Devisement dou monde* and drew up, for the first time in Marco Polo studies, a real *stemma codicum*.¹⁰⁸ Drawing on the research of Terracini, they proposed a new genealogical classification of the manuscripts. According to their hypothesis, Z constitutes a separate branch of the tradition, called «β», whereas V, L, and VB are placed in the other branch, called «α»: V derives directly from α, together with its collateral

¹⁰⁶ Terracini (1933), 417.

¹⁰⁷ I refrain from considering some of the weaknesses of Terracini's reconstruction, about which see Barbieri (2004c), 61.

¹⁰⁸ Burgio, Eusebi (2008).

« δ », which includes Fr, L, F, TA, VA, VB; L forms the « δ ''-group» with F; and VB belongs to the « δ '''-group», together with TA and VA:¹⁰⁹



I will not examine all of the differences between Burgio and Eusebi's and Terracini's classifications, but I would like to focus on the fact that, in both proposals, the Franco-Italian version F occupies a quite low position on the stemma compared to that of Z. In the first hypothesis, the ms. BnF fr. 1116 is separated from the archetype by two *codices interpositi*; in the second one, by four. These conclusions agree with Benedetto's opinion that the original text would have passed through «various phases of a progressive shortening» and F would represent «one of these phases».¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Burgio, Eusebi (2008), 45.

¹¹⁰ Benedetto (1928a), XXXI.

Although various important scholars¹¹¹ believe that Z is more faithful to the original draft written in Genoa than F, there are a good number who disagree. Already in the nineteenth century, Giovanni Battista Baldelli Boni (1827),¹¹² Giovanni Giuseppe Bianconi (1862),¹¹³ Guillaume Pauthier (1865)¹¹⁴ and Henry Yule (1871)¹¹⁵ proposed that the additions found in Ramusio's text might be developments posterior to the first redaction. This idea received further attention after Benedetto identified the

¹¹¹ In addition to the studies discussed above, we should mention Barbieri (2004c), 60-62; (2004b), 145-154; Burgio (2017).

¹¹² Baldelli Boni (1827), vol. I, XVII: «[...] è da avvertire, che avventurosamente, il celebre viaggiatore, mosso probabilmente dalla grata accoglienza, fatta dai più, alla sua opera, non si ristette dal ritoccarla ed ampliarla anche posteriormente; lo chè potè fare, spogliando i suoi diffusi memoriali raccolti in viaggiando, e di cui fa ei stesso menzione. E una, o più di quelle impinguate copie, ebbe a mano il dotto e avventuroso Ramusio».

¹¹³ Bianconi (1862), 60-61: «Forse M. Polo ebbe [= some passages attested only in Ramusio's version] narrate verbalmente in Patria: ma egli avvertitamente aveale forse escluse da' suoi scritti come indegne di esservi registrate. Alcune giunte del Ramusio vengono senza dubbio da questa fonte, la tradizione orale».

¹¹⁴ Pauthier (1865), vol. I, XIV: «[Marco Polo] avait sans doute fait une rédaction pour lui-même, laquelle, après sa mort, aura été trouvée dans ses papiers, ou recueillie de sa bouche, et qui aura passé ensuite avec une foule d'autres additions, moins authentiques, dans la rédaction italienne publiée par Ramusio». See also Pauthier's comment about a detail found only in R: «C'est là évidemment un développement postérieur à la rédaction primitive, qui porte cependant un grand cachet de vérité, et qui n'a pu émaner oralement, ou par écrit, que de Marc Pol lui-même» (*ibid.*, vol. II, 572-573 n. 10). The hypothesis that the alleged additions would depend on the author's oral accounts, already proposed by Bianconi (see previous note), is discussed by Roques (1955), 405, and Vogel (2013), 21-22.

It should be mentioned that Pauthier (1865), vol. I, LXXXVIII-XCI, developing an idea of Paulin Paris (1851), 12-13, also claimed that Fr's source was a version revised and corrected by Marco Polo. For arguments against this hypothesis, see Yule, Cordier (1903), vol. I, 92-94, and especially Benedetto (1928a), LVIII-LIX, LXXVIII-LXXIX. Pauthier's view was adopted by Langlois (1921), 253-255, Bertoni (1928), 289-290, and, recently, by Battaglia Ricci (1992), 87; (2001), XVII-XXII. See Barbieri (2004b), 150; Burgio, Eusebi (2008), 22-23; Burgio (2017), 3-4.

¹¹⁵ Yule, Cordier (1903), vol. I, 100: «I suppose that Polo in his latter years added with his own hand supplementary notes and reminiscences, marginally or otherwise, to a copy of his book; that these, perhaps in his lifetime, more probably after his death, were digested and translated into Latin; and that Ramusio, or some friend of his, in retranslating and fusing them with Pipino's version for the *Navigazioni*, made those minor modifications in names and other matters which we have already noticed. The mere facts of digestion from memoranda and double translation would account for a good deal of unintentional corruption. See also *ibid.*, 101.

Z-version. Since his critical edition appeared in 1928, numerous philologists and historians – Giulio Bertoni (1928),¹¹⁶ Dante Olivieri (1928),¹¹⁷ Roberto Cessi (1929),¹¹⁸ Ronald Latham (1958),¹¹⁹ John Kenneth Hyde (1982),¹²⁰ John Critchley (1992),¹²¹ John Larner (1999),¹²² Lucia Battaglia Ricci (2001),¹²³ Philippe Ménard (2001),¹²⁴ Jean Richard (2007)¹²⁵ and others¹²⁶ – have supposed that the *addenda* distinguishing Zⁱ and R from

¹¹⁶ Cf. Bertoni (1928), 290-291. On Bertoni's opinion about the source of Fr, see note 114.

¹¹⁷ Olivieri (1928b), 574-575.

¹¹⁸ Cessi (1929), 476: «Due sono le redazioni del libro dei viaggi di Marco Polo: la prima, quella genovese, dettata in volgare franco-italiano su narrazione dell'autore dal concaptivo Rusticello; la seconda, veneziana, stesa in latino volgare dallo stesso Marco, col sussidio della prima non senza modificazioni ed aggiunte, suggerite da postumi ricordi». Cessi's conclusions were criticised by Benedetto (1930c).

¹¹⁹ Latham (1958), 25 n.: «There is a good deal of evidence to support the view that the Latin version used by Ramusio was written later than (F) and embodied alterations and additions»; *ibid.*, 26 n.: «There is at least one indication that Z may contain additions made after Marco's imprisonment in Genoa...».

¹²⁰ Hyde (1982), 130-131. See particularly Hyde's view about R and Z's additions: «This must have been exactly the kind of thing that Marco's audience desperately wanted to hear, and it is incredible that any copyist would omit such passages once they had been inserted into the text. It is far more probable that they represent late additions made by Marco himself, dredged perhaps from his memory by persistent questioning, written down too late for incorporation into the main tradition, which is known to have proliferated well before the date of Marco's death» (*ibid.*, 131). This hypothesis was adopted by Jackson (1998), 85.

¹²¹ See Critchley (1992), 161-177. First of all, this scholar tries to prove, through a statistical analysis of the lexicon, that the supplementary parts of Z do not derive from a Franco-Italian text, but were composed directly in Latin. Secondly, he examines the contents and reaches the conclusion that «[t]he great variety of Z's additions suggests they are answers elicited by intelligent quizzing, perhaps by the same questioner, perhaps by several. They were added piecemeal, tagged on to an original draft which consisted 'only of a few things which he still kept in mind'» (*ibid.*, 173; quotation from Moule, Pelliot [1938], vol. I, 73). For a criticism of these theories, see Barbieri (2004b), 146 and n. 53.

¹²² Larner (1999), 4, 58, 185. For Larner, «there are virtually two versions of the Book. The first, 'A', is that begun in prison in 1298. The second, 'B', is a rewriting of the A text which includes many additions, clarifications, sometimes omissions, which was produced some time after Marco's return from Genoa to Venice. In this view 'B' is a restatement which is directed perhaps to a more private and restricted readership»; but see the reservations expressed in Barbieri (2004b), 146-147.

¹²³ Battaglia Ricci (2001), VIII-XXIV.

¹²⁴ Ménard (2001), 17-19.

¹²⁵ Richard (2007), 1489, 1501 and n. 22.

¹²⁶ See also Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 100. A similar, but more nuanced, view is held by Leonardo Olschki (1960), 110-111: «Our author must have made a wide acquaintance at Venice in these years [i.e. the years following his return], and his book must have been transcribed on various occasions, under his own supervision, in an attempt to satisfy the curiosity of a public ever

all remaining witnesses are the product of Marco Polo's reworking of his book.¹²⁷ Those who claim, alternatively, that this supplementary information is not only authentic, but also original,¹²⁸ counter the arguments used by the supporters of the theory of authorial revision by means of criteria of explanatory coherence.¹²⁹ Since there exist a number of errors shared by all manuscripts which prove their derivation from an archetype, it is unlikely that the Venetian traveller introduced additions and modifications into a corrupted copy without correcting its defects.¹³⁰ Furthermore, it can be ruled out that Z was made by Marco Polo himself or on his behalf, because it contains translation mistakes.¹³¹ Some scholars have pointed out that the textual disorder present in many chapters and the lack of a real conclusion at the end of the book seem to exclude a revision on the part of the author.¹³² Internal structural and stylistic evidence is also produced to support the notion of a single redaction. The passages transmitted solely in Z¹ and R not only combine and fit perfectly with the shorter text passed on by F and the rest of the tradition,¹³³ but also bear the typical features of Rustichello's style.¹³⁴

more hungry for information as the links with the Far East became more strongly forged in this century and the attempts to reach it by land and sea became more frequent. This editorial activity explains in part the numerous variants in the various versions of the book that bear the author's imprint in their style and subject matter». Olschki's opinion is quoted by Segre (1970), 196.

¹²⁷ For an overview of these positions, see Barbieri (2004b), 145-147; Burgio, Eusebi (2008), 22-23; Burgio (2017), 4-5.

¹²⁸ Burgio (2017), 3, has pointed out that such a distinction was introduced into Marco Polo studies by Casella (1929). While the first term indicates the authenticity of the contents, the second one refers to «their original presence in the first account». See also Pasquali (1952), 108. It should be mentioned that a few scholars deny the authenticity of some or all the additions transmitted by Z and R and consider them as late interpolations. See e.g. Dieu (1947), 112-113; Reichert (1997), 172. See also Pauthier's opinion cited in note 114.

¹²⁹ The arguments in favour of the authenticity of Z's *addenda* are summarised in Pasquali (1952), 107-108, and Barbieri (2004c), 60-62; (2004b), 147.

¹³⁰ Casella (1929), 215-217. On this reasoning, see the clarifications by Peretti (1930), 221.

¹³¹ Benedetto (1930c), 209-210.

¹³² Barbieri (2004b), 147.

¹³³ Peretti (1930), 226.

¹³⁴ Terracini (1933), 423-428.

The arguments for the single-redaction theory are certainly compelling, but far from being satisfactory, because they, in various cases, are unsuitable for explaining the complexity of the data which has emerged from research. It has been noted that a fact recorded only by Z¹ – the victory of the Golden Horde qan Toqta (Toctay) over the Mongol general Noqai (Nogay) and the latter's death¹³⁵ – took place in Autumn 1299, that is to say after the date of composition mentioned in the *Devisement's* prologue¹³⁶ and after the release of the Pisan and Venetian prisoners held by the Genoese authorities.¹³⁷ We consider it highly unlikely that the chronological reference contained in the first lines of the work («au tens qu'il avoit .MCCXCVIII. anç que Jeçucrit nesqui») ¹³⁸ indicates exclusively the beginning of the drafting process and not its end, and that the cooperation between Marco and Rustichello might have continued after they left Genoa.¹³⁹

Other and perhaps more decisive evidence in favour of the multiple-redaction theory arises from recent research on the manuscript transmission. The idea that the book underwent a revision after Marco's return to Venice, finds confirmation in Z's history. Several facts prove that this redaction circulated very early among members of the Dominican Order in North-Eastern Italy, especially in Veneto. The *Legendae* by Pietro Calò da Chioggia, written after 1330/1332 and before 1340, and the *Liber de introductione loquendi* by Filippino (or Filippo) da Ferrara, composed after 1325 and before 1347,¹⁴⁰ contain some passages extracted from Z. The two friars knew each other and both resided for a period at the convent attached

¹³⁵ Barbieri (1998), 548 (chap. 164, par. 10-13).

¹³⁶ Spuler (1943), 75-76; Latham (1958), 26 n.; Reichert (1997), 162, 172; Wehr (1993), 307; Battaglia Ricci (2001), VIII-IX, XII-XIV; Barbieri (2004b), 151-154; Richard (2007), 1501; Zagni (2011).

¹³⁷ Gallo (1955), 75; Cigni (1994), 14 n. 7; Battaglia Ricci (2001), XIV; Barbieri (2004b), 153 n. 75; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (2011b), 261; Zagni (2011), 91.

¹³⁸ Eusebi (2018), 35 (*Prol.* 4).

¹³⁹ See Ménard (2001), 22; (2017), 202; Battaglia Ricci (2001), IX, XIV-XV; Barbieri (2004b), 152-154. It must be remarked that the beginning of this passage («Sed noveritis insuper quod ...»), see Barbieri [1998], 548) suggests that it was inserted later into the first draft.

¹⁴⁰ The first work consists of a collection of hagiographic legends, the second one is a conversation manual. See also note 56.

to the Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. Accordingly, it is reasonable to think that the copy of Z that served as their source was deposited at the library of this convent.¹⁴¹ In the following centuries, too, Z seems to have circulated only in Venice.¹⁴² Around 1450, the cartographer Fra Mauro, a monk of the Camaldolese monastery of S. Michele di Murano, created a marvellous *mappamundi* (today in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice). For the representation of Eastern Asia's regions, he drew on a manuscript of Marco Polo's book very close to the Zelada codex (which I will henceforth designate as «Z^{fm}»).¹⁴³ In addition, it should not be forgotten that Giovanni Battista Ramusio used an exemplar of this redaction for his Italian translation published in 1559, as mentioned several times before. Finally, the linguistic analysis of Giuseppe Mascherpa has shown that the Latin of Z displays typical Venetian features.¹⁴⁴

A Venetian origin is also probable for the translation V.¹⁴⁵ Developing some suggestions of Benedetto,¹⁴⁶ Samuela Simion has recently succeeded in identifying a number of conjunctive innovations connecting this version with Z. She has demonstrated that V's source was a Latin manuscript very similar to the Toledan codex, but lacking most of the additional information which is particular to the latter.¹⁴⁷ Two papers of Giuseppe Mascherpa¹⁴⁸ and Veronica Gobbato¹⁴⁹ have proved that the Z-redaction progressively increased in size over the course of time. More particularly, they have established that the exemplar used by Pietro Calò and Filippino da

¹⁴¹ Amadori (1998); Gadrat (2010), 68-70; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 180-182; Gobbato (2015), 356-359.

¹⁴² Z probably circulated also in Venice's inland, because an inventory of the convent of San Nicolò in Treviso compiled in 1347 records a copy of Marco Polo's book bearing a title very similar to that reported by Calò and Filippino. See Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 183.

¹⁴³ Cattaneo (2004-2005), 171-178, 182-90; (2011), 191-219; Falchetta (2006), 64-67; Burgio (2009), 84-94; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 101, 228-230.

¹⁴⁴ Burgio, Mascherpa (2007), 123-132; Mascherpa (2007-2008), 42-77.

¹⁴⁵ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXIV; Simion (2007-2008), VIII-XXIII; Gadrat-Ouerfelli (2015), 106.

¹⁴⁶ Benedetto (1928a), CLXXIV-CLXXVIII.

¹⁴⁷ Simion (2019), 68-72, 79-110. See also Simion (2011), 33-43.

¹⁴⁸ Mascherpa (2008). See also Mascherpa (2007-2008), 164-171.

¹⁴⁹ Gobbato (2015).

Ferrara was less rich than the version attested in the Zelada codex and Ramusio's translation, and closer to F and the rest of the tradition (Fr TA VA; L V VB).¹⁵⁰ This conclusion may be corroborated by another clue. It is possible to deduce from the references contained in Calò's *Legendae* that his model exhibited the same numeration and the same number of chapters as the Franco-Italian version F.¹⁵¹ Such pieces of evidence lead to the conclusion that Z is the product of a multiple-redaction, which involved successive additions and modifications. The first and the second textual stage are reflected respectively in V and in Calò and Filippino's source, the third in Z^t, Z^{fm} and R.¹⁵² It should be noted, however, that new studies suggest that Ramusio made his translation from a text containing further author's variants compared to both the model of the Zelada codex and that of Fra Mauro.¹⁵³ Hence, the possibility emerges that there were at least four stages of Z's elaboration.

Recent results of philological research enable us to shed new light on the issue of the supposed division of the witnesses into two branches and the position of F in relation to the original draft. A major contribution to a better understanding of the earliest stages of the *Devisement dou monde*'s textual history comes from the investigation of the context in which the book was composed. A long series of studies conducted over the last few decades on the diffusion of Old French literature in Italy have identified a group of over thirty French manuscripts transcribed in Genoa by Pisan prisoners captured in the naval battle of Meloria in 1284.¹⁵⁴ Marco Polo and Rustichello da Pisa conceived and created their work in a milieu where a centre of book production was actively copying French manuscripts directed at a local audience. Several analyses have pointed out the strong resemblance between F and the manuscripts copied in the Pisan-Genoese

¹⁵⁰ Mascherpa (2008), 174-180; Gobbato (2015), 352-355. See also Mascherpa (2017), 46-49.

¹⁵¹ Benedetto (1959-1960), 574-575; Barbieri (2004c), 55; Burgio, Mascherpa (2007), 150-151 n. 93.

¹⁵² See the classification recently proposed by Simion (2017), 27; (2019), 86.

¹⁵³ Andreose (2017); Mascherpa (2017), (2018).

¹⁵⁴ Of the vast bibliography on this topic only a small selection of titles will be given here: Avril, Gousset (1984), 23-53; Gousset (1988); Benedetti (1990); Cigni (1993), (2009), (2010); Zinelli (2015).

scriptorium in terms of spelling and language.¹⁵⁵ Although it is not possible to establish with precision where F was produced, it is reasonably certain that it passed through the hands of a reader originating from western Tuscany (Pisa or Lucca) at a very early time.¹⁵⁶ The short fragment of the Franco-Italian version discovered about fifteen years ago by Chiara Concina¹⁵⁷ is very similar in form and content to F.¹⁵⁸ All these lines of evidence not only entitle us to connect these two witnesses of Marco Polo's book with the French manuscripts copied by Pisans in Genoa during the last fifteen years of the thirteenth century, but also lead us to conclude that the original Franco-Italian text mainly circulated in Tuscany and in the northern Tyrrhenian area. In this respect, it is perhaps useful to recall that the Tuscan translation TA was made from an exemplar akin to F.¹⁵⁹

The intensive activity of copying and reworking texts in the Genoese prison might explain some characteristics of the textual transmission of Marco Polo's book. The chapter CXC of the Franco-Italian version is devoted to the «island of Madeigascar» (*isle de Madeigascar*).¹⁶⁰ The variant *Madeigascar* is shared by all witnesses¹⁶¹ with the exception of Z, which exhibits the reading *Mogdaxo*,¹⁶² and, only partly, of V, which offers an intermediate form: *Madaschor*.¹⁶³ Nowadays, all scholars accept the view originally put forward by Alfred Grandidier (1892) and then developed by Paul Pelliot,¹⁶⁴ that the term *Madeigascar* attested in most manuscripts is simply a corruption of *Mogdaxo* found in Z. The place name definitely

¹⁵⁵ Andreose (2015b), 269-272; (2016a), 103-105, 109-110; Zinelli (2015), 84-86, 90, 92; Andreose, Concina (2016), 24-32.

¹⁵⁶ See Andreose (2015b), 273; (2016a), 110. The early circulation of F in western Tuscany is proved by a marginal note on folio 82r, written by a hand contemporary with the manuscript, which exhibits features typical of Pisa and Lucca variety.

¹⁵⁷ Concina (2007); Ménard (2012); Andreose, Concina (2016), 16-24.

¹⁵⁸ Andreose, Concina (2016), 20-24, 29-32.

¹⁵⁹ Benedetto (1928a), LXXX; Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1994), 349-350.

¹⁶⁰ Ms. BnF fr. 1116, 91r. See also Eusebi (2010), 213 (apparatus); (2018), 220 (apparatus).

¹⁶¹ Pelliot (1959-1973), 779 No. 287.

¹⁶² Barbieri (1998), 414 (chap. 124, par. 1).

¹⁶³ Cf. Simion (2019), 323 (chap. 106, par. 1). See also Simion (2011), 40.

¹⁶⁴ See Grandidier (1892), 24-28; Grandidier, Grandidier (1903), IX-XI; Pelliot (1959-1973), 779-781 No. 287. Cf. furthermore Cardona (1994), 656-658; Milanese (1978-1988), vol. III, 286 n. 1; Battaglia Ricci (2000), 10-11; Simion, Burgio (2015), *Lemmario*, under the heading *Magastar* (by Antonella Ghersetti and Eugenio Burgio).

does not indicate the modern Madagascar, which, in the seventeenth century, was so called from the erroneous reading transmitted by F and the majority of the *Devisement*'s versions (Fr L R TA VA VB),¹⁶⁵ but the peninsula of Mogadishu. It is interesting to note that the chapter index copied on the first folios of F exhibits the reading *Mogclasio*,¹⁶⁶ which is a wrong transliteration of the correct form *Mogdasio*. In medieval writing systems, it may happen that *d* erroneously is interpreted as the sequence of *c* and *l*. The presence of a double reading in F suggests that its copyist transcribed the chapter index and the text of the chapter CXC from two different models. While the source of the chapter displayed the erroneous variant *Madeigascar*, that of the index had the right term *Mogdasio*. This second source was probably situated higher up on the stemma than the ancestor which was at the origin of all the witnesses that offer the incorrect form of the place name – that is to say, the entire tradition with the exception of Z.

It is questionable whether (and how) F's copyist could have had access to this very authoritative manuscript. We cannot exclude the possibility that copies of the Z-version circulated in Tuscany in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, even though this is highly unlikely for the reasons stated above. The most economical hypothesis to explain the double reading in F is that it was transcribed in a place where several exemplars of the *Devisement dou monde* were present, among which there existed one that was very close to the original.¹⁶⁷ This assumption has profound implications for the history of the text, because it corroborates the theory emerging from recent scholarship that the "shorter" redaction transmitted by F and most of the other manuscript families (Fr L TA VA V VB) should not be considered as the result of a process of abridgement, but as reflecting a textual stage prior to that attested in Z and, partly, in R. By modifying the definition proposed by Benedetto, we could designate this latter stage of the text as "the phase posterior to F".

For the time being, the present state of research on *Devisement*'s textual transmission does not permit us to establish a definitive classification of

¹⁶⁵ Cardona (1994), 656-657.

¹⁶⁶ Andreose (2016a), 111-113, 125.

¹⁶⁷ Andreose (2016a), 114.

the manuscripts. Perhaps we will be able to draw a conclusion about the relationship between Z (and R) and the rest of the tradition in the future. The philological work started by Benedetto over ninety years ago has not come to an end yet, despite the significant results obtained by the scholars who continue to concern themselves with the exciting and challenging problems posed by the manuscript transmission of Marco Polo's book.

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