

6 Plucking Hairs from the Great Cham's Beard: Marco Polo, Jan de Langhe, and Sir John Mandeville

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I

The two most famous European books about Asia, those of Marco Polo and John Mandeville, were written within sixty to seventy years of each other, between 1298 and, at the latest, 1365, which is to say toward the beginning and end of the first direct engagement of Europe with the further East. The work of Jan de Langhe, a Fleming who wrote in Latin under the name Johannes Longus and in French as Jean le Long, and whose life straddled those same years, is much less well known. But he too has importance in our theme, which is to consider the relative importance of their writings to the growth of geographical knowledge in Europe.

First in time was Marco Polo, who, with Rustichello of Pisa, began writing his book, as its preface says, 'in the prisons of Genoa in the year 1298.' Since I have already written about it at some length elsewhere,¹ I will make only a few salient points here. First it is worth stressing that it is a collaborative work. Marco was a man who had spent twenty-four years, most of his life, all his adult life, in Asia. His return to Europe must have been a deeply unsettling experience; he was coming back to a world that he would often have found difficult to understand. It was, in particular, a world of whose literary traditions he knew almost nothing. If he were to write of what he had learned, it was essential that he should find a collaborator, and by good fortune he eventually found him when captured by the Genoese. It is a commonplace that this man, Rustichello, wrote poorly, that his style is singularly lifeless, and many have doubted whether it was indeed such good fortune that it was precisely this man whom Marco met. Yet

much the same might be said of some of the best-selling authors of our own or any day; their skill, like Rustichello's, is in having an understanding of what contemporaries will take. Here that ability was of key importance, since the novelty of the book's material was likely to provoke scepticism. What this meant too was that Marco was not a completely free agent. Literary collaboration always exacts penalties; in this instance it is as though it were Marco's western audience which is helping him to write the book, a book he has sometimes to change in order to meet their interests or expectations.²

One should add that if it were Rustichello who devised the plan of the work, he had a gift for organization of material. That plan takes the form of a series of imaginary journeys to, within, and from China. Yet, though well developed for its task, it has led to a serious misunderstanding of what the book actually is. It is not a travelogue. One finds a lot of passages which at first sight allow one to think that it is describing real travels. In fact, these are simply an organizing device to present geographical material. There is no description here of the route of the Polos through Asia; the route is just the means by which Marco and Rustichello lead their readers from West to East and then back from East to West, the route of the narrator through his book.

It is worth saying this again, since still today the book is very commonly spoken of as the *Travels* of Marco Polo. In the Middle Ages it was never given that title. What it was normally called was some variant of the *Description of the World*, or the *Book of the Great Khan*. The first to call it the *Travels* was Giambattista Ramusio at the end of the 1550s. Ramusio was a Venetian, the compiler of a great mass of geographical reports, mostly travel literature, which he called *Travels by Land and Sea* (*Navigazioni e Viaggi*). When he included Marco, it was explicable that he should have changed the title of his book to *I Viaggi di Marco Polo*. In doing this, Ramusio almost changed not just its title but its subject. Call a book 'The Travels' and, if it is interesting enough, people will set about discovering the route of these travels. The first whom I know of to attempt this was the learned Jesuit Athanasius Kircher in his *China Illustrata*, published in 1667. Kircher was also the first to highlight a common crux of later scholarship: 'I am staggered [*vehemente miror*] that Marco Polo does not mention the Great Wall of China through which he must have passed.' And, as if that observation was not going to breed enough difficulty, he then went on to discuss Marco's itineraries and to print a map of what he believed was the Polos' journey from the Caspian to Canbaluc.³

This proved an attractive game for anyone who knew something about the East. You wrote out all the place names in the order they appeared in the Book, you tried to identify them, and then you said this was the route the Polos took. The more you knew the better you could display all your knowledge. One of the best at it was the Victorian editor, Henry Yule. And his conclusions, refined by his friend, Henri Cordier, became more or less standard.⁴ The only difficulty with them – though this wasn't first pointed out until some twenty years ago – was that the results were unbelievable. Here are the Polos carrying a message from the pope, already two years overdue, to the most powerful ruler in the world. By virtue of their possession of the gold *paiza* given to them by the Great Khan, their safety was guaranteed in Mongol lands, and they could have used the Mongol post-system right up to Beijing, which would have brought them to the Khan in, at most, nine months. Instead, if you follow Yule, they decide first to sail to China, which, as a contemporary put it, was 'the most difficult and dangerous way' and which would have taken them at least double the time.⁵ Accordingly they make their way to Hormuz on the Indian Ocean. When they get there, they take one look at the Arab ships and timorously decide they'll go by land instead. They set off again, once more studiously seeking to avoid Mongol territory. They arrive at Badakhshan, where they do some mountaineering, traversing a plateau of the Pamir some sixteen thousand feet up. And so on it goes. It is like travelling from Toronto to New Orleans by way of the Rocky Mountains. The first to rebel against this was Jacques Heers in 1984.⁶ Since then others have added their contributions to this insight.⁷ Yet scholars continue to march along the old itineraries. In 2001, in a new edition of the northern French manuscripts of the Book, we have an editor who once again forces the luckless Polos to make their laborious way up into the Himalayas.⁸

The truth is the Book is not an account of travels: it is a geography. As such, it has very little in common with any geography found previously in the West. There had been very few chorographies, and Marco and Rustichello's book bears no resemblance to them. For instance, and despite what so many writers claim,⁹ the book does not serve up a diet of fabulous marvels. None of the 'The Monstrous Races' appear here. The marvels here are above all true marvels, such as the amazing number and wealth of the cities of China, rather than those prodigies which are the staple of most other accounts of the East written in the Middle Ages. To write the book, that is to say, its authors had to create a new genre of western literature.

That genre derived ultimately from Chinese writings. It came from Chinese local topographies, geographical encyclopedias, and anthropological descriptions. Or rather, since Marco himself knew no Chinese, from what of Chinese geographical literature had been taken on board by the Mongol administrative class which at that time ruled China. One thinks here of the reports delivered to the Great Khan Kublai on missions he had sent out in search of strange birds and beasts, or on the expedition he had sponsored to find the source of the Yellow River. Or again the written reports of ambassadors to foreign parts, the road-guides within and outside the Empire, and the maps used by the Mongol government.¹⁰

This is the tradition that informs the work. Marco's Book is that of a Mongolian civil servant who has taken early retirement, and is telling us about the human geography of Asia, its customs and folklore, and above all, about the political authority of the Great Khan who there holds sway. These things are welded together into a work which is bounded by immensely wide horizons and could only be written because Marco had been the servant of an enormous empire. Within that span, what's remarkable is the variety of what he takes into consideration: trade-goods, artisan production, accounts of animals, birds, fish, vegetation, religions, crops, customs, governments. It should be added that, in modern comments on the book, one quite often meets suspicious, slightly querulous remarks, pointing out that Marco says nothing about architecture, or art, or landscape. But these things were not yet discussed in the Europe of his day; one has to wait until the humanists and the artists of the Renaissance before they become common themes.

Certainly it could be argued that, in what is treated, there is much that is superficial, that the concision is often extreme. Of the seventy Chinese towns which are recorded in the book, only two receive anything beyond a brief one- or two-sentence description.¹¹ Yet it is because Marco so often merely grazes the surface of his materials that he can take on the whole of Asia. As a result, what the book gave its first readers was a portrait of a new world. Here Europeans received their introduction to the Far East, China, and the East Indies. And they were introduced to this by a book which derived its power from the fact that its author was a man who, having left Venice at the age of seventeen and having spent some twenty-four years of his life in the service of an Asian empire, was someone who had found himself at home in that empire, more so perhaps than he was, on his return, in Europe.

This was Marco Polo's legacy. Was it, in the later Middle Ages, accepted as truth or as a romantic fantasy? Generally, scholars have declared that it was disbelieved and ignored. In my own study, I have concluded that this was not so. Though some readers were sceptical, Marco Polo came to carry general conviction, more particularly when, in the fifteenth century, he was taken up by the humanists. As a result, his was a work which made a major contribution to that European discovery and reconaissance of the world which took place at the end of the Middle Ages.

II

Back in the fourteenth century, one who believed in the truth of Marco Polo was the Benedictine monk Jan de Langhe. Born at Ypres, he was by 1334 a member of the ancient and celebrated abbey of Saint-Bertin at Saint-Omer, some twenty miles from Calais. Two of its abbots had been canonized; it boasted a vast collection of relics; it had what for the time was a very large library of over eight hundred volumes; and it owned considerable rights and property in northern France, Flanders, and the Rhineland.¹² As a young monk Jan was sent to the University of Paris, where he read philosophy and law. On his return he was appointed legal defender of the Abbey's possessions and eventually, in 1365, elected abbot. These were difficult times, not least because the monks had the English at Calais as their close neighbours and were often caught up in the Hundred Years' War. In the monastery's annals one reads: 'While he lived our Abbot Jan struggled on behalf of his church, but as a result of the wars of the English and French, and the revolts of the Flemings, he could do very little of what he wished to restore its fortunes.'¹³

In 1383, the last year of his life, we find him writing a chronicle which tells the story of the abbots who had ruled Saint-Bertin. This is set within a universal history, and an account of local circumstances in France and Flanders.¹⁴ It seems at first sight to be just what you would expect from a member of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is written in serviceable medieval Latin; it is serious, level-headed, conventional. Predictably enough for anyone writing in the thick of the Hundred Years' War, it has a lot on 'the good old days.' The good old days were the days of Abbot Guibert, who lived in the thirteenth century: 'All things then smiled and rejoiced; in his time there was peace in the country and if lords went to war, it was in other lands. In those days

the young obeyed the old, servants were most punctilious in their service, and were content with little.' You could see that from looking at the accounts for the building of the refectory; the builders in those days were satisfied 'with some bread, a plate of beans, and a penny a day.'¹⁵

The characteristic tone of an elderly gentlemen in a position of power is broken only at one moment when suddenly, and in impassioned and confessional terms, Jan warns his readers against alchemy:

It promises fair things and gives few; powerfully does it seduce and draw men on, and much are they deceived in that. *Experto crede!* Take it from one who knows. For I who write was deceived in that, and I have seen many others deceived in the same way, and I have never seen anyone who achieved its supposed purpose.¹⁶

For a brief instant he reveals himself as having at least once in the past been a fantasist, a dreamer.

Just two more things about this man before we look at the big question which hangs over his head. The first, which may just be of importance in considering the big question, is that one of his monks described him as being so large-bellied, so grossly fat, that he was barely able to walk.¹⁷ The second is that he had a strong interest in the East. In his *Chronicle*, after telling of the death of Clement IV in 1268 and the three-year papal interregnum which followed, Jan goes on to say this:

In this interim, the great emperor of the Tartars, Cobilaazan, brother of Alahon, sent his emissaries to the pope with letters. These, claiming great devotion to the faith of Christ, asked that the pope should dispatch to him in sufficient numbers men well versed in the Catholic faith and the liberal arts who would know how to prevail in disputations with the unbelievers, Jews, Saracens, and idolaters of his land; at the same time they asked that he should send some of the oil from the lamp burning at the sepulchre of the Lord in Jerusalem.

These emissaries were two citizens of Venice called Niccolò Polo and his brother Maffeo Polo, with Catagal, a certain Baron of the Tartars who died on the way. The two men took three years from the Kingdom of Cathay and the aforesaid Great Khan to Rome. When they arrived they found that the pope had in fact died, and so, while waiting for the election to take place they went to Venice to attend to their family and business affairs. Then, seeing the election to be so long drawn out, and afraid that

their lord would blame them for the over-long delay, they took ship to the Holy Land, the lord Niccolò Polo taking with him back to the Tartars his son, a very able young man, twenty years old or thereabouts, called Marco Polo.¹⁸

He goes on to tell how in the Holy Land the Legate (as he calls him) Tebaldo came to be elected pope, how he sent them off with two friars who then deserted the party, and how, finally, they were warmly received by the Great Khan. He continues:

And then the lords Niccolò and Maffeo were sent back again to these parts [Europe] with other Tartars. But Marco Polo, whom he made a knight, was retained by the Emperor and stayed with him for a period of twenty-seven years. Because of the skill he showed in his affairs he sent him to various parts of India, Tartary and the islands where he saw many marvellous things about which he afterwards wrote a book in French, which *Book of Marvels*, with many others similar, we have in our possession.¹⁹

This is the only account of the Polos in which Marco's age on leaving Venice is reckoned as 'twenty or thereabouts' instead of, as it is generally given, 'seventeen,' and where his father and uncle go back straightaway to Europe rather than staying on in China and returning with Marco in 1292. De Langhe must either be referring to a version of Marco's book which has been lost or he has misremembered his reading of the Book from perhaps several years back.²⁰ But what is of most interest here are Jan's concluding words on the 'many other similar' books which are 'in our possession.'

In fact, in 1351, over thirty years before, Jan had produced another book from just these materials. This was a collection of his own translations from Latin into French of six works about the East. The first is a book called the *Flower of the Histories of the East*, which had been written in France in 1307 by Prince Hetoum, a Prince of Little Armenia, a country which had had a lot to do with the Mongols and the realms they ruled. The second is by an Italian traveller in India and China, a Franciscan missionary called Odoric of Pordenone, who on his return from the East in 1330 had dictated an important account of his experiences. And the third is a record of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem through Egypt and Palestine by the German knight William of Boldensele, written about 1336. There are other very interesting works, but these for

our purpose are the most important. This compilation survives in six manuscripts. In two of them (among which is the famous, richly illustrated *Livres des Merveilles* given by John the Fearless of Burgundy to the Duc de Berry in January 1413), the books of Marco Polo and of John Mandeville are added to the basic six texts. The earliest surviving manuscript says that it was written by Jan of Saint-Bertin in 1351, and that he is 'at present, 1368, Abbot of that place.'²¹

In itself this collection is sufficient to give Jan de Langhe a position in the history of geography. This is because it established a new genre. It is the first surviving example of those translated compilations of travels beyond Europe which in the Renaissance culminate in the multiple volumes of Giovanni Battista Ramusio and Richard Hakluyt. One tries to imagine what impulse lay behind Jan's work. Translation from Latin to French was a noticeable feature of French culture of the fourteenth century. An important figure here, for instance, is Jean de Vignay, who between the 1320s and 1340s translated at least twelve sizeable Latin books into French, among them some which treat of the East.²² Yet Vignay's works fit into the traditions of the Parisian book trade. They are all commissioned works, most of them commissioned by the French royal family. De Langhe's collection differs from these in that he does not mention any patrons and does not make any dedications, which would suggest that his book has not been commissioned, that it has not been written to raise money – as an alternative, say, to alchemy – but that it came into existence as a diversion, the satisfaction of a private passion.

Here then is this Benedictine monk, normally tied to his cloister, who in his life never travels anywhere further than Avignon, who in 1351 has just lived through the most terrible events – the Black Death, the pogrom against the Jews who have been accused of spreading it, the opening stages of the Hundred Years' War. His days were already dedicated less and less to the liturgical life or that religious contemplation which perhaps first drew him to the cloisters, more and more to the study of the intricacies of law and the struggle to retain the material possessions of the monastery. He who will never go to Jerusalem, let alone beyond it, thinks it is worth while to translate these works. They do not just describe, as Boldensele's does, the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre – that would be easily comprehensible. That was an already common literary form, a work of sympathetic piety, a mental pilgrimage which allowed the home-stayer to participate vicariously in the great religious experience. They include, too, accounts of much wider

journeys beyond Jerusalem to the realms of the Great Khan and the furthest horizons of fourteenth-century Europe. Perhaps what lay behind his interest was some element of escapism.

In which case is it possible that, within at most fourteen years, it is he, Jan de Langhe, who, under the same impulse, wrote, again in French, that classic story of eastern travel, *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*? M.C. Seymour has remarked that Jan would be 'an ideal candidate' to be its author. Seymour thinks of the author as someone who is a fluent French speaker, who compiles his work in a large continental library, a man who is an ecclesiastic with an excellent knowledge of the Bible, fluent in Latin, and someone who has never travelled to the lands he describes.²³ Certainly the three principal sources which *The Book of Sir John Mandeville* draws upon, often word for word, are Hetoum, Odoric, and Boldensele, and the versions of them the author draws upon are precisely those in the French of Jan de Langhe. With two of these, Boldensele and Odoric, it's clear that the author also knew and used the Latin texts. Accordingly one has to ask how many libraries outside Saint-Bertin would, even in northern France, have held by 1365 not only the Latin originals, but also the French translations which had been made only a few years before.

As it is, the identity of the original author is still a matter of speculation. Christiane Deluz, who has done so much to illuminate the text and to place it within its fourteenth-century context, holds that the author was an English layman, that he had actually visited, at least, the Near East, and that the original text was written in Anglo-French rather than continental French.²⁴ If any of these contentions are true, they would be fatal to any claims for Jan de Langhe. I remain drawn to the idea of Langhe's authorship. This is partly, as I've said, because, given the character of book-production of the time, it is difficult to think of the volume written in 1351 as having travelled very far before 1365. But also, I confess, for subjective reasons. I like the idea of a monk who, bound to his monastery as a serf to the glebe, dreams of a freedom which takes him to the ends of the earth. As a man already developing that enormous paunch which will cause him to be remembered as having had great difficulty in walking, who thinks himself into the image of a great traveller. And again as one who, living a few miles from 'the March of Calais' held by the English, in a locality harassed by the intrusions of English soldiers, ironically assumes the body and mind of an English knight, a man to whom he gives his own name, 'John.'

III

What the truth of this is cannot be established until that day when both Jan de Langhe's translations and the continental French version of Mandeville's text have been edited with a full collation of all the manuscripts.²⁵ In the meanwhile, we have the *Book*, one which in the later Middle Ages was much more popular than Marco Polo's. What sort of book is it? For Josephine Bennett, it was 'a *romance* of travel,' which belonged 'primarily, to the history of literature.'²⁶ But since she wrote those words, another view has grown up. This has been expressed most emphatically by C.W.R.D. Moseley, who has written of the *Book's* 'impeccable geographical thought (in the sense that we use the term "geographical" in our methodology),' and goes on to say that it 'embodies as true a picture of the world as anyone in the fourteenth century could have given.'²⁷ A big claim. The scholar who has looked at the question at the greatest length is Christiane Deluz. Her book bears the subtitle *Une 'Geographie' au XIV^e Siècle*, which signals that she comes down firmly on Moseley's side. She argues from such things as that the Mandeville-author offers over sixty place-names from the Far East. She highlights his account of a near circumnavigation of the world, which she sees as an important vulgarization of those proofs, which John of Holywood had given in the thirteenth century, that the earth was a globe. And she has a long section in which she analyses the number of what she calls geographical expressions in the text — these are words like 'weather,' 'river,' 'stream,' 'desert,' and so on — and shows, perhaps not altogether surprisingly, that there were indeed a lot of them.

Yet there are many elements in the *Book* to suggest that it is a geographical fantasy. East of Jerusalem it makes no attempt to deal with coherent space. Its principal source is Odoric of Pordenone; yet the Mandeville-author curiously dispenses with most of the genuine geographic material found in it. Instead, he portrays Asia as a sequence of islands, each with their own marvels. There is an island where mountains of gold are guarded by ants as big as dogs, others where rivers run not with water but with precious stones. There are Isles of Cannibal Giants, of Basilisk-eyed Women, of Apple-Sniffers, and so on. Finally we come to the borders of Paradise, and from there on to the Vale Perilous or Vale of Enchantment. Although it has been tried, all attempts to map the book are doomed.²⁸ And it is the reverse of the truth to say, as Moseley has said, that the *Book* seeks to exclude

fabulous material. In fact, when the marvels don't appear in his sources, the author cannot resist putting them back. After describing an island called Dondin, Odoric had gone on to say this:

There are many other strange things in those parts about which I will not write, for without seeing them no one could believe them. For in the whole world there are no such marvels as in that kingdom. I have written about only those things of which one can be certain that they are as I have spoken of them.²⁹

This note of caution is the reverse of what the Mandeville-author is looking for. It only spurs him on to redress the balance. As Josephine Bennett has pointed out,³⁰ it is precisely at this point that he decides to treat us to what Odoric has omitted, the whole gamut of 'the monstrous races': headless men with eyes and mouths in their backs, men who use their huge upper lips to shield their faces from the sun, monopedes, Cynocephali, men with ears hanging to their knees, and so on, and so on.

The *Book* is outside geography and anthropology; and it is outside history too. Here in the fourteenth century, Sir John and his companions enlist for sixteen months in the army of the Great Khan, which was, we are told, at war with the King of Southern China.³¹ Yet, as Marco Polo and Odoric had shown, the Mongols had already conquered all of China back in the 1270s. Still more striking, this is a world in which the mythic emperor Prester John continues to rule in majesty. On his return from Karakorum in the 1250s, the Dominican missionary William of Rubruck had reported that the Prester was just 'a prosperous shepherd' whom the Nestorians had set up as their king. ('They called him King John and they used to tell ten times more about him than the truth. For the Nestorians of these parts do this kind of thing. Out of nothing they make a great brouhaha.') After Rubruck, Marco Polo again was to make it clear that Prester John was simply just another vassal among Mongol warlords. Then Odoric of Pordenone had gone on to echo and reinforce this by saying that not just one-tenth, as Rubruck had had it, but not one-hundredth part of what was told about his lands was true.³²

The Mandeville-author ignores all this spoil-sport realism. Instead he throws his weight behind all those in Europe who preferred to retain their dreams. With him Prester John lives on, as Emperor of Greater and Lesser India, Emperor of Upper India, one of the four

great Lords of the Earth. He resumes all that splendour which the famous, fabulous twelfth-century Letter of Prester John had bestowed on him. The land over which he rules is four months' journey in breadth, its length measureless. It is divided into seven provinces, each presided over by a subordinate king. His palaces at Nise and Susa are constructed from a dazzling variety of gold and jewels; and here he is attended by the Patriarch of St Thomas as his pope. The mythic resonances are so strong that they cannot be resisted; mere fact must step down before all the pleasures of medieval Orientalism. And writing at a time when most who continued to proclaim the Prester's reality and power were transplanting him from the East to Ethiopia and Abyssinia, the Mandeville book kept him on the borders of the territories of the Great Khan. It is with Prester John that any attempt to portray the book as a geography, as giving 'as true a picture of the world as anyone in the fourteenth century could have given,' must vanish.³³

What is here instead is a cheerful, exotic travel-fiction with lots of marvels and good stories, plus public-spirited, effortless uplift. Following some moral reformation at home, the crusade will be successful quite soon. Indeed since the religion of the Muslim and all other peoples has so much in common with ours, they may very well become Christians first. Here is a work of escapism, which flourishes on unreality. It is just the thing to take one's mind off the Hundred Years' War, if only for a few hours.

Having said which, it is easy to see why, although its author must have known Marco Polo's book, he never draws upon it. Marco's habitual tendency is to cut down all fabulous marvels and to present what is sternly factual. I write 'sternly' because, as all his readers know, Marco is never in the least touched by any awareness that he might possibly be boring them. There is a marvellous integrity in his determination to tell them all manner of things that they don't want to know. Think of those imagined itineraries through Mangi:

Now we will quit Suigiu and go to a city which is called Viugiu, and you should know that this Viugiu is a day from Sugiu [*sic*]. It is a very large city ... But as there is no novelty to be called to mind there we will leave it and I will tell you of another city called Vughin.

And this Vughin is also a very large and noble city. They are idolaters, obey the Great Khan and have paper money ... Now we will part from that city and tell you of the town of Ciangan ...³⁴

And so it goes on. One can imagine Rustichello getting very edgy as Marco insists that these passages stay in; the factual density is going to destroy any attempt to make a name for himself as a writer of chivalric literature. The interest of dozens of towns is no more than that: 'their inhabitants are idolaters, obey the Great Khan, and have paper money.' The words run like a litany – yet we have to be told all their names. Our fantasy is shrivelled up. The Mandeville-author does not have any cataloguing of that sort. He is terrified of boring his readers with, as he puts it, 'many places which it would take too long to name and relate,'³⁵ and this leads him to the constant production of new marvels at the expense of reality.

With that contrast between Polo and Mandeville, I think of the arguments of Francis Wood, who has claimed that Marco Polo never went to China, that he wrote his book after spending twenty-four years hidden away somewhere around the Black Sea or at Constantinople. This thesis has been critically examined and dismissed by several scholars, most thoroughly in a long article by Igor de Rachewiltz.³⁶ In addition to what they have written, there is something else to be said: if Marco Polo had set down an account of the East which he had invented without going there, what he wrote would not have looked at all like *The Book of Marco Polo*. What it would have looked like would have been *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*. It would have been a book which was based solely on sources available in the West, on the West's imagining of the East, and it would have been filled with all those heady marvels which so delight the Mandeville-author. It too would have been a travel romance.

IV

If Mandeville's *Book* is simply a travel romance, does this mean that it had no role in the European discovery of the East? Could it, nonetheless, given its vast popularity, given the vast ignorance of the East in the West, have influenced exploration, have had geographical consequences? Despite the occasional exceptional incident – and despite the arguments of several scholars basing themselves on these exceptions – my own conclusion is that the *Book* was rarely accorded any serious standing in scholarship or cartography. Around 1450, the Bavarian monk Friedrich Ammann gave a list of the sources for his 'Cosmographical Table.' He included Ptolemy, Marco Polo, and Pomponius Mela, but specifically excluded Mandeville as unreliable.³⁷ This is the

first time, as far as I know, that this happens, but it happens a lot thereafter. There is a great contrast here with the way in which, at that very time, the humanists (notably the circle of Toscanelli and Nicholas of Cusa) were taking up Marco Polo.

I say one finds exceptions – for instance, Martin Behaim in 1492 certainly cited Mandeville as one of the sources for his globe.³⁸ The most famous of these, one often cited, is the appearance of a Latin version of Mandeville in the first edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, published at London in 1589.³⁹ But Sir John was not resurrected here as a result of any geographical considerations, but in order to meet political needs. Europeans who were planning to take over lands outside Europe could at the time seek legitimacy only by claiming, as the Spanish did, to have been their first discoverer – of course, the first discoverers were the indigenous inhabitants, but they did not signify – or by appealing for legal endorsement to the pope, as the French had done but as Protestant England could not now do. This explains the opening section of Hakluyt's work, where one finds documents to prove that back in the sixth century King Arthur had first discovered America, that the Welshman Madoc had colonized it in the twelfth century, that the Bristol merchant, Robert Thorne, had rediscovered it in the fifteenth century, and that 'Sebastian' Cabot (Hakluyt did not get the right Cabot but nobody cared) had then discovered it again on behalf of Henry VII. All this constituted a counter-claim to Spain's assertion of rights over the New World. Britons had got to America long before Columbus. Hakluyt included Mandeville for a similar reason. He was hoping that the early appearance of this Englishman in the East would justify, by the doctrine of first discovery, any English expansion in the East. He gave it in the Latin version because he was appealing to the community of international law. He did not translate it into English – as he does all the other Latin in his book – because, as I would guess, he did not want English sailors or merchants to become confused by it.

Hakluyt follows the text with an Admonition to the Reader, still in the Latin, which ends with the words, 'Vale atque aut meliora dato, aut his utere mecum,' which might be translated as: 'Farewell, and either produce something better yourself, or make use of this as I'm doing.' He continues, in defence of Mandeville's fables, to give some extracts from Pliny's *Natural History* which spoke of the monstrous races.⁴⁰ It may just be an unfortunate phrase – 'make use of this as I'm doing' – but one wonders how far it may be a subconscious revelation of cynicism. However this might be, Hakluyt eventually came to

realize that it wouldn't carry conviction; nine years later, when he published a second edition, silently, without explanation, our English knight is thrown out. Mandeville thereafter was normally treated as the fiction it is.

Yet, though it seems improbable that John Mandeville ever cut much ice in learned circles, with scholars, with cosmographers, imagination is often more powerful than reason and romance too may be an essential prelude to discovery. In 1512, Ponce de León mounted an expedition from Puerto Rico in an attempt to discover 'the Island of Bimini,' which was said to contain a 'fountain of youth' which washed away the effects of age and which looks very much like that 'Well of Youth' from which Sir John tells us he has drunk. As a result, Ponce became the first white man to discover Florida, to where, of course, today the elderly still flock in search of much the same thing.⁴¹ Seven years later, Diego de Velasquez, governor of Cuba, commanded Cortés to mount an expedition to Mexico, telling him to keep a weather eye out for dog-headed men and those with great flat ears. And it was of course the Amazons who gave their name to America's greatest river.⁴² One cannot claim any direct influences in these incidents, but they all derive from that world of medieval fantasy to which Mandeville belongs.

Above all, in the England of Shakespeare, the East was Mandeville's East. It is where Benedick pleads to go to escape Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*: 'I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes ... I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia, bring you the length of Prester John's foot, fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard, do you any embasage to the pygmies rather than hold three words conference with this harpy.' It is from where Othello draws the tales with which he woos Desdemona, stories of:

the cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders ...⁴³

There is something curiously appropriate in Martin Frobisher having a copy of Mandeville aboard when he picks up fool's gold on Baffin Island.⁴⁴ Or that Sir Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, that archetyp-ical bogus prospectus, should tell us of the anthropophagi dwelling by the river Caora: 'Such a nation was written of by Mandeville, whose reports were holden for fables many yeeres, and yet since the East

Indies were discovered, we find his relations true of such things as heretofore were held incredible.⁴⁵ Adventurers need romance; they need fiction as well as fact.

There are, we have seen, considerable differences in the way in which the three books and their four – or is it three? – authors tell of the East. Jan de Langhe, inventor of a new genre, presents his collection and translation, a work of history, of popularizing scholarship, valuable for those who were trying to discover truth or create fiction. The Mandeville-author offers one of the high points in centuries of European Orientalism, a powerful stimulus to the imagination. Marco Polo and Rustichello gives us simply pages and pages of what was for their world new information, one hair after another patiently plucked from the Great Cham's beard. With these three works, scholarship, fantasy, the narration in chivalric rhetoric of a lived experience, came together to commemorate the first age of European involvement in the Far East and, at the same time, to persuade western minds, in the years that followed, once more to reach out once toward that world.

APPENDIX

The Collection of Jan de Langhe

A.

Jan de Langhe's Book consists of six principal parts:

1. The *Itinerarium*, the account by the Franciscan Odoricò da Pordenone of his travels in the Middle East, India (c. 1321), and China (1324/5–28). He was at Padua in May 1330, when he dictated his work to Fra Guglielmo da Solanza, and died there 14 Jan 1331. A copy was sent to Avignon where it was recopied, with some rewriting, by Henry of Glatz.
See: *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. A. van den Wyngaert (Quaracchi, 1929) i, 381–495;
Les voyages en Asie au XIV siècle du bienheureux frère Odoric de Pordenone, ed. H. Cordier (*Recueil de voyages et de documents*, X, Paris, 1891).
H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 2nd ed. revised by H. Cordier (London, Hakluyt, 1915, photo-reproduction, New York, 1967), vol. 2.
F.E. Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China: Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1992), 148–51.

2. *The Flower of the Histories of the East*, a book on the Mongols and 'The Realms of Asia' by Prince Hetoum of Korykos (otherwise Hethum, Hayton, Haytoun, etc.), nephew of King Hetoum I of Little Armenia. Shortly after becoming a Premonstratensian canon, at the command of Pope Clement V, Hetoum dictated his work in French to Nicholas Faulcon, at Poitiers in 1307. Later Faulcon translated it into Latin. Jan de Langhe retranslated Faulcon's Latin back into French. Since Little Armenia had been a vassal state of the Mongols from the 1240s, Hetoum was in a position to know a great deal about the East. The first part of the book is an account of the realms of Asia. The second gives an history of the 'Emperors' of the continent since the birth of Christ (Persians, 'Saracens,' Khwarazmins, Mongols). The third speaks of the Mongols from the time of Genghis Khan. The fourth part, which consisted of a plan for a crusade, is in Jan's version considerably abbreviated. Using this source, in his *Chronicon S. Bertini*, 728, Jan de Langhe writes of King Hetoum I's embassy to Möngke in the early 1250s.

See: *Die Geschichte der Mongolen des Hetoum von Korkyros (1307) in der Rückübersetzung durch Jean le Long, Traitez des estas et des conditions de quatorze royaumes de Aise (1351)*, ed. Sven Dörper, mit parallelem Abdruck des lateinischen Manuskripts Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, R 262, Frankfurt a. M., 1998. (= Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XIII: Französische Sprache and Literatur, 236).

Hayton, *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient*, ed. C. Kohler (*Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Documents arméniens*, Paris, 1906, vol. 2).

Hetoum, *A Lytell Chronycle*, ed. G. Burger (London, 1988), reprints Pynson's English version with valuable comment.

3. Two letters written by the Great Khan, Toghon Temur, to Benedict XII in 1338 with the Pope's reply.

See: Jan's translation in 'Notice sur quelques relations diplomatiques des Mongols de la Chine avec les Papes d'Avignon,' ed. M. Jacquet, *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, 7 (1831), 417-33.

On this incident B.Z. Kedar, 'Chi era Andrea Franco?' *Atti della Societa Ligure di Storia Patria*, n.s. 17 (1977), 369-77.

4. *The Book of the Estate of the Great Khan*, written around 1334 and dispatched to Pope John XXII by either John of Cori or Guillaume d'Adam, successive Archbishops of Sultania in Persia, gave a brief account of the East and missionary hopes there. This is only known in Jan de Langhe's version.

See: Jan's translation in 'Le Livre du Grant Caan,' ed. M. Jacquet, *Journal Asiatique*, 6 (1830), 57-72.

H. Yule, *Cathay*, 3: 89-103, for English version.

5. An account of and guide to pilgrimage through Egypt and Palestine to Jerusalem, written by the German knight William of Boldensele, about 1336. See: 'Itinerarius Guilielmi de Boldensele,' ed. C.L. Grotefeld, *Zeitschrift des Historischen Verein für Niedersachsen*, 1852, rptd. Hanover, 1855, 236-86.

I have been unable to see *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus*, 1336, ed. C. Deluz; with translation of Jean Le Long, roneotyped, Paris, 1972. An edition of the Latin, French, and German texts is being prepared by Scott D. Westrem; see the introduction to his *Learning from Legends in the James Ford Bell Library Map-pamundi* (Minnesota, 2000).

6. *The Book of Travels in Parts of the East* written by the Dominican friar, Ricoldo da Montecroce. Ricoldo was born c.1242 at Montecroce, near Florence, joined the Dominicans at Florence in 1267, and became MA at the convent of S. Caterina at Pisa in 1272. He then travelled to Palestine, and journeyed on as far east as Baghdad. He was back at Florence in 1307, in which year he presented the pope with his *Confutatio Alcorani*. Died 1320. Most of his works (against Muslims, Jews, Eastern Christians) were written at Baghdad.

See: Monneret de Villard, *Il libro della peregrinazione nelle parti d'oriente del frate Ricoldo da Montecroce*, Rome, 1948.

A. Dondaine, 'Ricoldiana: notes sur les oeuvres du Ricoldo de Montecroce,' *Archivium Fratrum Praedictorum*, 37 (1967) 119-79.

B.

The work survives in six manuscripts, which I give from Dörper's edition of Hetoum, pp. 41-98:

1. Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. Mss. Ancien fonds fr.2810, written on vellum, 297 leaves, 265 large miniatures.

This is the celebrated *Livres des Merveilles* given by John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy to the Duc de Berry in January 1413. It gives five of the six constituent parts of Jan's translations, but substitutes Faulcon's original French text of Hetoum for Jan's translation. To these are added an Anglo-French version of Mandeville, the northern French version of Marco Polo, and a Life of St Alban of Germany or Mainz.⁴⁶

See: *Le Livre des Merveilles*, ed. H. Omont, 2 vols, Paris, 1904 (Réprod. de man. et min. de la Bibl. Nat., XII).

M. Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Boucicault Master* (London, 1968), 112-16.

Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre des Merveilles du monde*, ed. Christiane Deluz (Paris, 2001), 50-3.

Marco Polo, *Le Livre des Merveilles, Manuscrit Française 2810 de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, commentary of F. Avril, M-Th. Gousset, J. Monfrin, J. Richard, M-H. Tesnière, Th. Reimer, Lucerne, facsimile ed., 1996.

L. de Backer, *L'Extrême Orient au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1877), printed from this manuscript his (not always accurate) transcriptions of the text of Odoric (89-124), Hayton (125-255), Ricoldo of Montecroce (256-334), the Archbishop of Sultania (335-46) and the letters between Toghon Temur to Benedict XII (347-56).

2. Bern, Bürgerbibliothek, Ms. 125.

Parchment of 14th century, which, as in the previous manuscript, substitutes the original French text for Jan's translation of Hetoum and adds copies of the Anglo-French version of Mandeville and the French of Marco Polo.

3. Besancon, Bibliothèque de la Ville, 667

Parchment, consists of the six pieces translated by Jan of Saint-Bertin, adding that he wrote it in 1351 and that he is 'adpresent abbe dicelluj lieu Mi1.CCC.lxUiii.'

See Dörper, 77, who uses it as the base manuscript for his edition of Hetoum.

4. Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 12202

Paper, 15th century, has the six works of Jan, with some text missing at the beginning.

5. British Library, Cotton, Otho D. II

Parchment, first half of 15th century, severely damaged by fire. Contains the six pieces of Jan, plus an *Histoire de la forteress de Lusignan en Poitou* (86r-150v).

6. Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 1380

Parchment, 15th century, contains the six pieces of Jan.

The collection, as a whole, was first printed as *Lhystore merueilleuse plaisante et recreative du grand empereur de Tartarie, seigneur des Tartars, nomme le Grand Can*, Paris pour Jean-Saint-Denys, 1529. (According to Backer, above, only two copies survive.)

NOTES

- 1 Larnar, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*.
- 2 Moreover, in the course of the later Middle Ages – and Iain Macleod Higgins, in *Writing East*, has shown how the same thing happened to the Mandeville book – subsequent transmitters of the text often imposed their own messages upon it.
- 3 Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis ... illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667), Pars secunda, cap. vi, 87–90. The map is between pp. 47 and 48. On the Wall, see Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*.
- 4 See *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian*, ed. H. Yule, 3rd edition, revised by H. Cordier (London, 1903); reprinted in 2 volumes (New York, 1993), passim. The most laborious construction of the supposed itinerary is found in N.M. Penzer's edition of John Frampton, *The Most Noble and Famous Travels of Marco Polo together with the Travels of Nicolò Conti* (2nd. ed., London, 1937, 1st ed. 1929), where 'owing to the kindness of Sir Aurel Stein in allowing me to use the maps illustrating his *Third Journey to Innermost Asia*, I have been able, with the help of my expert cartographer, Miss G. Heath, to construct eleven [!!!] entirely new maps which I trust will help to elucidate the itinerary of the great traveller' (xi).
- 5 *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. A. van den Wyngaert (Quaracchi, 1929) 1: 349 (letter of Fra Giovanni Montecorvino, 1305).
- 6 In chapter 5 of his *Marco Polo*, Heers advances as an 'hypothèse naturellement hasardée mais, je crois, séduisante' the question as to whether the Book is following 'non pas la route effectivement suivie lors de l'expédition, mais une route exceptionnelle, idéale donc imaginaire, encore jamais décrite?' (151). This is hardened in 'De Marco Polo à Christophe Colomb: comment lire le *Devisement du Monde*?' esp. 126: 'Vouloir, par habitude, faire du *Devisement* un recit de voyage est manifestment une erreur. Rien ne milité en ce sens et le *Livre* ne dit jamais rien de pareil.'
- 7 See, e.g., D. Rieger, 'Marco Polo und Rustichello da Pisa. Der Reisende and rein Erzähler.'
- 8 Marco Polo, *Le Devisement du Monde*, vol. 1, *Départ des voyageurs et traversée de la Perse*, principal ed. Philippe Ménard, with M.-L. Chènerie and M. Guéret-Laferté.
- 9 E.g., Ménard, *Le Devisement du Monde*: 'A la façon de ses contemporains Marco Polo est persuadé que l'Orient est une terre de prodiges' (1:106). But cf. Larnar 77–83.
- 10 J. Needham, with Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3, *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth* passim; Larnar 84–5.
- 11 C. Deluz, 'Villes et organisation de l'espace: La Chine de Marco Polo.'

- 12 J.G. Nichols, 'Inventory of Reliques at St Omer 1465'; G.W. Coopland, *The Abbey of St Bertin and Its Neighbours 900-1350*; D. Nicholas, *Town and Countryside* 92, 100, 102.
- 13 'Johannes Iperii Continuatum S. Bertini Chronicon,' in *Veterum scriptorum et munimentorum historicorum... opera*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1729), col. 619 (of 614-32). The Abbey's 'border' character is underlined by the fact that in 1360 it became the centre for the collection of the ransom for the release of King John II; E. Perroy, *La Guerre de Cent Ans* 114. This was to lead to accounting disputes between the Abbot and the French monarchy; see 'Johannes Iperii Continuatum' 618-19.
- 14 *Chronica monasterii Sancti Bertini auctore Iohanne Longo*, ed. O. Holder-Egger; Holder-Egger's life of Jan, etc. 736-47; chron. 747-860. The life of St Erkembode, fourth abbot of Saint-Bertin, found in *Acta Sanctorum* (1863), 12 April, 93-5, has also been attributed to him. L. van der Essen, 'Jean d'Ypres ou de Saint-Bertin,' argued that it is a work displaying particular historical insight and is to be distinguished from the standard hagiography of the age. But M. Coens, 'L'auteur de la vita Erkembodonis' shows that this is to confuse our John V the Long of Ypres with the true author, John III, also of Ypres, abbot from 1187 to 1230.
- 15 *Chronica monasterii Sancti Bertini* 853.
- 16 *Chronica monasterii Sancti Bertini* 853.
- 17 Iacopus Mayer, *Commentarii sive annales rerum Flandricarum Libri septendecim* ed. Antonius Mayer (Antwerp, 1561), p. 200r; J.F. Foppens, *Bibliotheca Belgica* (Brussels, 1739), 2: 669-70 (under Joannes Iperius).
- 18 Holder-Egger, the editor of the text in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, omitted passages, among them this, which he held to be of no interest. Here one must consult the older edition, Johannes Longus, *Chronica sive Historia Monasterii sancti Bertini* from E. Martène and U. Durand in *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1717, reprint Farnborough, 1968), 746.
- 19 *Chronica sive Historia monasterii*, 746-7.
- 20 Neither the northern French version (in Ménard), which has 'Alaü,' 'Cogatal,' and 'Cablay,' nor the Franco-Italian (Marco Polo, *Milione/Le Divisament dou monde*, ed. G. Ronchi), which has 'Alau,' 'Cogatal,' and 'Cublai,' has the form of names that Jan gives in his chronicle. All the manuscripts of Pipino's Latin version that I have seen have 'Alau,' 'Cogatal,' 'Cublai.'
- 21 See Appendix for a fuller account of the Collection.
- 22 C. Knowles, 'Jean de Vignay,' and D.A. Trotter's introduction to his edition of Jean de Vignay's *Les Merveilles de la Terre de Outremer*.
- 23 M.C. Seymour, *Sir John Mandeville* 23-4. On the date of composition,

see 5-7. The first northern French and Anglo-French versions of the text say that it was written in 1356 and 1357 respectively, which seems probable.

- 24 Christiane Deluz, *Le Livre de Jehan de Mandeville*, passim, and in the introduction to her critical edition of the Insular text: Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre des merveilles du monde*. Against Mandeville as an Englishman and as dying at Liège, see Seymour, *Sir John Mandeville* 11-15, 25-36.
- 25 In her edition of the Insular text (note 24), Deluz gives suasions for an English origin by citing some different Continental versions of words used in the Insular text of 1371, but concludes: 'seule une édition critique de la version continentale permettrait d'arriver à des certitudes' (33-6).
- 26 Josephine W. Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville* 19.
- 27 C.W.R.D. Moseley, 'Introduction' to his translation of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* 15; and his 'The Metamorphoses of Sir John Mandeville,' esp. 7. Christian K. Zacher, who broadly follows him in *Curiosity and Pilgrimage*, tells us that Moseley 'is currently [1976] preparing a lengthy study of the strong influence Mandeville had on Renaissance voyagers' (184).
- 28 Compare *Mandeville's Travels: Text and Translations*, ed. M. Letts, end-paper to vol. 1, with Deluz, *Le Livre*, 400-1 and Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre*, 88-9, 'Mappemonde de Mandeville.' To draw such maps requires knowledge of much later maps than those available in the 1340s. In the Deluz vesion, based confessedly on Behaim's globe, one sees for instance a representation of 'Cipangu' or Japan (found in Marco Polo but not in Mandeville) and a coastline of Africa which cannot have been suspected before the fifteenth century.
- 29 H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 2nd ed. revised by H. Cordier (London: Hakluyt, 1916, photo-reproduction, New York, 1967), ii, 176.
- 30 Josephine Bennett 37-8. See also Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World* 154; *Mandeville's Travels: Text and Translations*, ed. M. Letts, ch. 22, 342-4.
- 31 'Et sachiez que my compaignon et moy avecques nos valles le servismes en soudees xv. mois contre le roi de Marchi, a qui il auait guerre' (*Mandeville's Travels*, ed. M. Letts, 353).
- 32 'Itinerarium Willelmi de Rubruc,' in *Sinica Franciscana* 1: 206-7; Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither* 2: 245, n.1 for Jan de Langhe's version of Odoric: 'Il n'en est mie la centisme par de ce que on dit comment soit riche terre et noble pais.'
- 33 'Ci commence a parler du pays et des ylles de lempereur Prestre Iehan' (*Mandeville's Travels*, ed. M. Letts, ch. 30, 383-7). And see 499-506 for translated extracts from Prester John's Letter, probably used by the Mandeville-

- author. Cf. Bernard Hamilton, 'Continental Drift: Prester John's Progress through the Indies,' esp. 247-55.
- 34 Marco Polo, *Milione/Le Divisament dou monde*, ed. G. Ronchi, ch. 151.
- 35 'mointe pays qe trop serroient long a nomer et divider.' Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre*, ed. Deluz, ch. 20, 331.
- 36 Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Marco Polo Went to China.' See also J.P. Voiret, 'China, "Objektiv" Gesehen'; Jørgen Jensen, 'The World's Most Diligent Observer'; U. Tucci, 'Marco Polo, andò veramente in Cina?'; D.O. Morgan, 'Marco Polo in China - or Not.'
- 37 D.B. Durand, *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus of the Fifteenth Century* 176.
- 38 C.W.R.D. Moseley, 'Behaim's Globe and Mandeville's Travels'; E.G. Ravenstein, *Martin Behaim* 62-71.
- 39 R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation, made by Sea or ouer Land* 23-79.
- 40 Hakluyt 77. I do not think it has been pointed out that the wording is influenced by Horace, *Epistles*, I, vi, 67-8: 'Vive, vale! si quid novisti rectius istis, candidus imperti; si nil, his utere mecum.' It may have been simply the attempt to produce a modish classical echo which gives the unhappy tone.
- 41 L. Olschki, 'Ponce de Léon's Fountain of Youth.'
- 42 L. Weckmann, 'The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America'; K.N. March and K.M. Passman, 'The Amazon Myth and Latin America' (see 292-4 for Amazons in Prester John, 294-5 for Amazons in Alexander romances).
- 43 *Much Ado about Nothing* 2.1.246-53; *Othello* 1.3.143-4.
- 44 E.G.R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography, 1485-1583* 36-7.
- 45 Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* 178.
- 46 Supposedly martyred at the beginning of the fifth century; see *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, ed. F. Caraffa 1: 659-62. On five occasions, this Life is bound together with the Anglo-French version of the *Book of Sir John Mandeville*; see Josephine Bennett 170-1. On 271 she cites from BN. fr. 5633 the explanation offered there: 'Pour ce que je suis nés de Saint-Alban, et maintes gens de nostre pais cuide qu'il ne soft nul autre Sain Albain que celui de nostre pais, je vueil que vous sachiez qu'il y a ung autre Saint Albain en Almagne.'