

# Saggi

## EXPLORING A GERMAN VERSION OF MARCO POLO'S «DEVISEMENT DOU MONDE»

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### 1. Introduction

Just like its alleged author, Marco Polo's work has travelled through space and time, encountering different peoples and languages. As Gadrat Ouerfelli points out,<sup>1</sup> twenty-six versions of his work were made in just two centuries, not to mention the fact that it was translated and rewritten in thirteen languages and it has survived in over 140 witnesses. However, while Marco Polo's explorations in the East are famous worldwide, the intricate paths that the manuscripts have gone through in the course of the centuries are surely less well-known. Some areas in the *stemma* of the *Devisement dou Monde* (from here also abbreviated as DM) are specifically still obscure and some versions of the text have not yet been edited. This is the case of the German redaction DI, which will be the subject of the present contribution.

Before reaching the core of the article, a brief overview of the long debate on Marco Polo's MS tradition will be provided, setting the scene for the discussion of DI. Limiting the scope to the latest results of scholarship would in fact be misleading, as it would conceal the uncertainties and complexities that lie at the basis of the studies dealing with the entangled textual transmission of DM. Contextually, the Venetian version VA of Marco Polo's work and its Tuscan adaptation (TB<sup>2</sup>) will be introduced, following, from top to bottom, the branch from which the German redaction originated. This approach provides a benchmark

<sup>1</sup> C. Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen Age. Traduction, diffusion et réception du Devisement du monde*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015 (*Terrarum Orbis* 12), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The latter is to be distinguished from the older TA, which has enjoyed a higher degree of scholarly attention than the more recent B version.

against which the variants present in the extant copies of DI can be checked. Caution is of course always needed, given the inevitable degree of uncertainty due to the loss of both the Tuscan model used for the translation and the very first attestation of DI.

An entire section will then be dedicated to the medieval German translation of Marco Polo's work. After a survey of the state of the art, some new comments on the topic will be offered, in order to shed new light on the manuscript tradition of the analysed version. Specifically, it will be claimed that the three main witnesses of DI<sup>3</sup> are not copies of one another. In the attempt at offering a model of the current advances in research on DI's textual tradition, a basic *stemma* of the German MS tradition will be presented. Nonetheless, it will also be shown that there are arguments for entertaining more complex hypotheses regarding DI's stemmatic configuration: the discussion will consequently lead to the presentation of a more elaborated *stemma*, which will include a level of *codices interpositi*.

## 2. Manuscript tradition of DM

According to Benedetto,<sup>4</sup> two main branches are to be identified in the rich manuscript tradition of the *Devisement dou Monde* [FIG. 1], A being the one to which the majority of versions belong and B consisting of four redactions.<sup>5</sup>

A striking difference between the two branches is the presence in B of additional chapters, whose origin is still debated. As the introduction to the digital scholarly edition of Ramusio's *Dei Viaggi di Messer Marco Polo*<sup>6</sup> reads,

<sup>3</sup> The main witnesses being München, BSB cgm 696, the fragment preserved in the same library with the shelf mark cgm 252 and the *incunabulum* printed in Nürnberg in 1477. All the witnesses of DI will be presented below, in section 3.2.

<sup>4</sup> L.F. Benedetto, *Marco Polo, Il "Milione"*, prima edizione integrale a cura di L.F. Benedetto, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 1928.

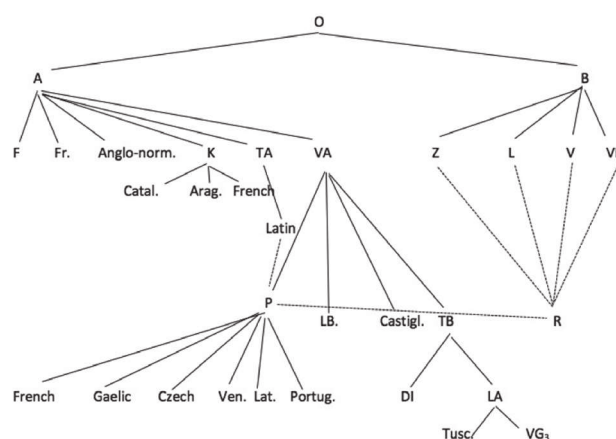
<sup>5</sup> The *stemma* in FIG. 1 is based on the representation of Benedetto's hypotheses given by Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> E. Burgio, M. Buzzoni, A. Gheretti, *Dei viaggi di messer Marco Polo. Giovanni Battista Ramusio*; edizione critica digitale progettata e coordinata da Eugenio Burgio, Marina Buzzoni, Antonella Gheretti; a cura di Samuela Simion e Eugenio Burgio, Venezia, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2015 <http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/libri/978-88-6969-00-06/giovanni-battista-ramusio/> [15/03/2019]. The role of Ramusio's edition (R in FIG. 1) is quite extraordinary: as a matter of fact, the text established by the Italian geog-

... due ipotesi si fronteggiano per giustificare tale situazione: chi pensa, seguendo Benedetto, a un testo originario *più ricco* di quello di F (completo degli *addenda* attestati in Z V VB e L), progressivamente “ridottosi” nelle copie dirette e nelle traduzioni-riscritture (e definibile in filigrana nella comparazione essenzialmente di F con Z, V e R); chi ritiene invece che gli *addenda* siano l'esito di progressivi incrementi ‘d'autore’ a un testo originario non molto diverso da F.<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 1

Benedetto's hypothesis, as interpreted by Gadrat Ouerfelli.



While Burgio and Eusebi,<sup>8</sup> whose proposal is presented in FIG. 2, agree with Benedetto on the fact that the *addenda* in Z are actually to be attributed to the original, they disagree on the distribution of the witnesses

rapher and humanist gives the impression of being a mosaic whose *tesserae* come from different and sometimes unknown places, as shown by the dotted lines in the *stemma*. This trait was used by Benedetto to entangle the almost inextricable skein of Marco Polo's textual tradition (A. Barbieri, «I “Viaggi di Messer Marco Polo” di Giovanni Battista Ramusio: preliminari», in *ibidem*).

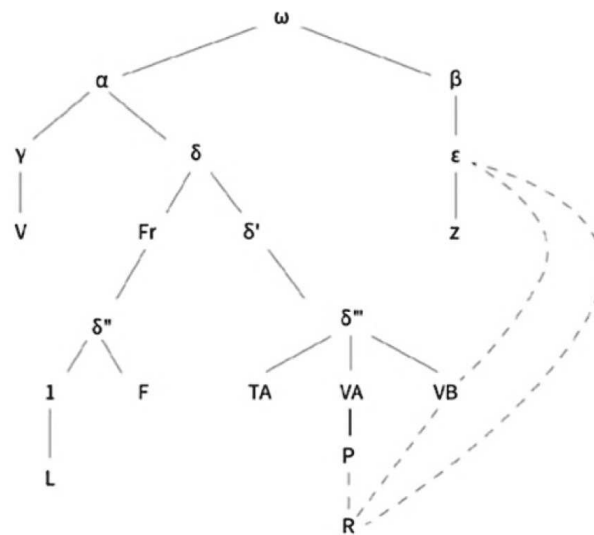
<sup>7</sup> «... the attempt at justifying this situation involves the confrontation between two different points of view: someone thinks, following Benedetto, of an original text *richer* than F (comprising the *addenda* attested in Z V VB and L), which was progressively reduced in its direct copies and in its translations/rewritings (and whose outline becomes visible through the comparison between F on the one hand and Z, V and R on the other); others believe, instead, that the *addenda* were the result of progressive additions on the part of the author to an original text that was not much different from F» [my translation].

<sup>8</sup> E. Burgio, M. Eusebi, «Per una nuova edizione del Milione», in S. Conte (ed.), *I Viaggi del Milione. Itinerari testuali, vettori di trasmissione e metamorfosi del Devisement*

in the *stemma*. As a matter of fact, taking the cue from a similar proposal put forward by Terracini,<sup>9</sup> they maintain that branch B actually coincides with only one redaction, i.e. Z, attested by two witnesses, the others being lost. In this hypothesis the value of V is higher, as this version is taken to represent an intermediate stage in a reduction process which caused the text to acquire the shape of F, distancing itself more and more from an original version that included the *addenda* of Z as well as the chapters attested by F but absent in Z.

FIGURE 2

Burgio and Eusebi's proposal (2008).



Some years later, a new understanding of the textual transmission, deriving in particular from the study of the indirect tradition of branch β, led the scholars to revise their own assumptions and formulate a new hypothesis, shown in FIG. 3 and first presented in 2017.<sup>10</sup> The rea-

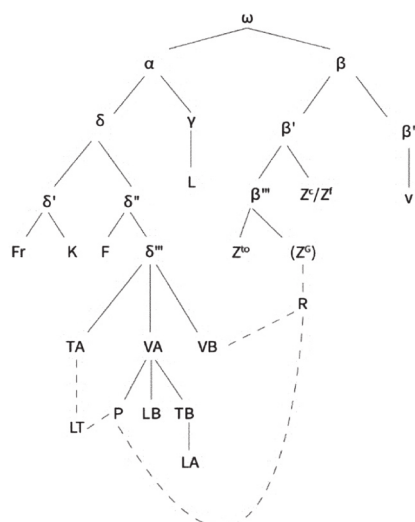
*du monde di Marco Polo e Rustichello da Pisa nella pluralità delle attestazioni*, Roma, Tiel-  
lemedia, 2008, pp. 17-48. In particular, see p. 45 for the *stemma*.

<sup>9</sup> B. Terracini, «Ricerche ed appunti sulla più antica redazione del Milione», *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* VI, 9 (1933), pp. 369-428.

<sup>10</sup> S. Simion, «Tradizioni attive e ipertesti. Ramusio “editore” del Milione», *Quaderni Veneti*, VI, 2 (2017), pp. 9-30. The stemma presented here is the result of a collective discussion entertained by various scholars in the field.

soning underlying the *stemma* in FIG. 3 can be summarised as follows: although the hypothesis of a gradual reduction of the content holds true for branch  $\alpha$ , the opposite seems to happen in the case of branch  $\beta$ : here, while a version of Z (*Z brevior*) agrees with F in its content, another version of Z presents, instead, some more sections, which are therefore to be considered as additions rather than conservation of original material. As the arguments presented by Simion are convincing, and given the general agreement among scholars, this will be taken as a reference in the present study as well.

FIGURE 3  
Latest proposal for DM's textual tradition.<sup>11</sup>



### 2.1. From VA to DI through TB

On the way down to DI, one encounters the family of F, which also includes the Emilian-Venetian redaction VA,<sup>12</sup> and constitutes 70% of

<sup>11</sup> The German translations DI and VG<sub>3</sub> are not included in Simion's paper. See below for a more detailed *stemma* of TB, from which the German versions descend.

<sup>12</sup> For the linguistic identity of this version see A. Andreose, «La prima attestazione della versione VA del Milione (MS 3999 della Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma). Studio linguistico», *Critica del testo*, III (2002), pp. 655-668.

the whole MS tradition of DM.<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, this is the version that Pipino da Bologna used to make his own translation, the latter being attested by around 60 witnesses. As pointing out all the specificities of VA would go beyond the scope of this article, it will suffice here to underline at least one common trait distinguishing the witnesses of this version, namely the fact that its compiler seems to have been more interested in geography than in history: the chapters concerning purely historical facts are missing, for instance those dealing with the battles between the Mongolian chieftains, while the more geographical sections are maintained. This aspect is particularly relevant, as the same trait would then be inherited by the Tuscan version TB and, in turn, by the German DI.

While VA was written at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the oldest manuscripts attesting its Tuscan adaptation TB belong to the second half of the same century. Again, it is worth mentioning certain peculiarities of the Tuscan redaction as they would eventually characterise DI, too: both Tuscan versions of DM, the older TA and the less studied TB, show some traits that recall a mercantile manual,<sup>14</sup> offering travel tips to the merchants who were about to set out on long dangerous journeys.

The German translation of TB is therefore marked by a tendency towards a more pragmatic function, but, if compared with VG<sub>3</sub> – the other medieval German translation of Marco Polo's work, whose model is a Latin translation of TB – DI actually shows a more literary oriented character, which is instead discarded in VG<sub>3</sub>. For instance, the protagonist of the story is presented as a knight in DI, while this characterisation of the traveller is completely missing in VG<sub>3</sub>.<sup>15</sup> What is more, the German translator of DI feels the need to add, at the very beginning,

<sup>13</sup> Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo*, p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. V.B. Pizzorusso, *Scritture di Viaggio. Relazioni di viaggiatori e altre testimonianze letterarie e documentarie*. Roma, Aracne, 2011, p. 104; Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo*, p. 46; E. Amatucci, «La Redazione Toscana B del Milione di Marco Polo: Edizione Critica», unpublished PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Lettere, 1982-1983, p. LXXIX.

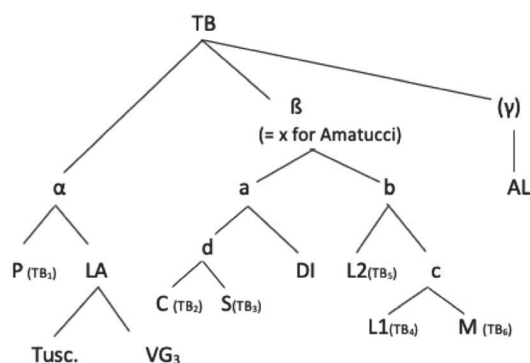
<sup>15</sup> E.H. Tschärner, *Der mitteldeutsche Marco Polo nach der Admonter Handschrift. Mit einer Tafel in Lichtdruck*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1935, pp. XLIV-LII; X. Ertzdorff, «Gedruckte Reiseberichte über China in Deutschland im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert», in X. Ertzdorff, D. Neukirch (eds), *Reise und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit. Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposium vom 3-8 Juni 1991 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*, Amsterdam, Atlanta, 1992, pp. 422-426; N. Nushdina, «Die Darstellung des "Fremden" und des "Eigenen" in der Reiseliteratur des Mittelalters», unpublished PhD diss., Julius-Maximilian-Universität Würzburg, 2004, pp. 20-36.

that the Polo brothers did not leave their homes in order to do business, but just for the sake of travelling and discovering the wonders of the world, guided by their own will only:

diffe zwen prúder ... auß zügen, nicht chauffmanfchcze zu treibê, fûnder allain zû fechen, vnd fromde lande zû fûchen, vnd wunder der welt ... Dazum̃b dife zwen prúder weife, cluge, vnd wol verſtanden, dÛrch chainen, andeʀn fîn, oder Iren willen, E vnd pas möchten aín genügen thûn, dife welt zû fechen dañ mit kauffmanſchacze, oder ín kauffmans weife<sup>16</sup>

Before going into the details of the German textual tradition of DM, however, it should be noted that TB, in the present study, is read in Amatu-  
 tucci's edition.<sup>17</sup> By combining her study with Benedetto's proposal, it is possible to draw the *stemma* of TB as follows:<sup>18</sup>

FIGURE 4  
 Stemma of the TB branch.



<sup>16</sup> The passage ist taken from München, BSB cgm 696, f. 138v. All transcriptions of the texts of DI are made by the author of this article and were conducted on primary sources, that is, on the witnesses preserving the German redaction DI.

<sup>17</sup> Amatu-  
 tucci, «La redazione toscana B», pp. I-XCVII.

<sup>18</sup> In her edition, Amatu-  
 tucci (*ibidem*) does not consider the Latin and German translations of the text (i.e. LA, VG<sub>3</sub> and DI): they are included here for the sake of convenience and their positions are defined according to Benedetto's hypothesis (Benedetto's *sigla* are in brackets; cf. Benedetto, *Marco Polo*, p. CXXXII). The Tuscan translation of LA corresponds to Vaglianti's codex and was edited by Formisano (L. Formisano, *Iddio ci dia buon viaggio e Guadagno*, Firenze, 2006). However, in Amatu-  
 tucci's description no *codex interpositus* is found between TB and P, which she considers, as a matter of fact, as the most authoritative copy of TB, AL being a very short and rather problematic fragment (cf. pp. xciv-xcv in Amatu-  
 tucci's edition). Finally, she calls x what here is referred to with β.

Interestingly, it was possible to confirm Benedetto's suggestion that DI might derive from a more conservative model:<sup>19</sup> for instance, C and S present extremely short headings, while the ones in DI coincide with, or are at least very close to the headings of L1 and M. They are however not present in manuscript P, which served as the guide text for Amatucci's edition and which she considers as the most authoritative witness of TB. She namely discarded the headings of a and c claiming that they are «*evidenti rimaneggiamenti dei due modelli di TB, rimaneggiamenti di autenticità*».<sup>20</sup> However, the similarities between DI and c allow us to attribute the longer version of the headings to at least β. This statement is clearly proven by the juxtaposition of the titles of the sections in DI (as they are reported in cgm 696) and the ones in a and c (listed in the appendix of Amatucci's edition). The following examples will serve as some evidence:

(1)

Nel tempo di Balduino Imperadore [a]

Come messere Niccola polo e 'l suo fratello da vinegia arrivarono In gostantinopoli colloro mercatantia E d'indi si partirono e andarono a Bocca oro Singnio d'una provincia di tarteri [c]

Wie des Ritters Marcho polo Vat<sup>4</sup>, genant Nicholo, mit feinem p<sup>4</sup>ūd<sup>4</sup>, genant maffeo, auffüren, zū Venedig. fremde lant zu fūchen, Vnd vō erften gen Constantinopel chomen [cgm 696, f. 138r]

(2)

Della tavola D'oro che fece il gram Chane [a]

Come il gran Can mandò messere Niccola e 'l fratello con uno suo barone per inbasciadore a roma al papa de' cristiani E ccome arrivaro per quelli cammini [c]

Wie der grofe cham fendet Nicholo vnd Maffeo polo mit fampt ainem feinem lanthe<sup>n</sup> In potfchaft gen Rom zu dem hailigen vater dē Babft vnd wie es in ergingen in difer reyfe gen Rom [cgm 696, f. 143v]

<sup>19</sup> Benedetto, *Marco Polo*, p. cxvii.

<sup>20</sup> «Evident manipulations of the two models of TB, manipulations of authenticity», Amatucci, «La redazione toscana B», p. 218. As already mentioned, at this stage of the work Amatucci's edition is used as a reference for TB, being aware, however, that a closer examination of the witnesses of TB is necessary when establishing a critical text for DI.

(3)

Ora sequita di Turcomania [a]

D'eriminia grande Ed ècci L'arca di noe Ed ècci una fonte che gitta olio assai [c]

Von dem grofen Ermiņa Da die archen noe ift die er machet fur der finflucht  
Auch da ift der prūnnen der da fteetlichen ölle geytt [cgm 696, f. 152v]

The agreement between versions DI and c with respect to a is clearly visible: this needs to be taken into consideration in the establishment of the critical text of TB. That the German version DI has been so neglected in the literature on Marco Polo is therefore all the more surprising when it comes to the studies on TB, given the evident relevance of the DI version for the reconstruction of the original shape of the Tuscan redaction.

### 3. DI branch

#### 3.1. State of the art

In the Middle Ages two German translations of Marco Polo's text were made, which are generally designated as VG<sub>3</sub> and DI, as was briefly introduced before: the former is preserved in a single manuscript (Admond, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 504, ff. 1r-59v), which has been already edited,<sup>21</sup> although the edition is now rather dated.<sup>22</sup> Version VG<sub>3</sub> was considered by Tscharnner as dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>23</sup> but more recent studies have shown that it should probably be dated to the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, due to the fact that its source text, version LA of the *Devisement dou Monde*, entered Germany no sooner than the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> As for the other medieval German translation, all the witnesses that have survived were compiled in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but the original translation of the text is lost and the translator remains anonymous.

<sup>21</sup> Tscharnner, *Der Mitteldeutsche*.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. N. Steidl, Marco Polos "Heydnische Chronik". *Die mitteldeutsche Bearbeitung des "Divisament dou monde" nach der Admonter Handschrift Cod. 504*, Aachen, Shaker Verlag 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Tscharnner, *Der Mitteldeutsche*, p. II.

<sup>24</sup> Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo*, p. 60.

While VG<sub>3</sub> has been studied quite in detail,<sup>25</sup> DI still has an aura of mystery around its witnesses: the few who actually dedicated some attention to this version usually took the *incunabulum* of Nürnberg as a reference,<sup>26</sup> without motivating or discussing their choice. Nushdina, Ertzdorff and others,<sup>27</sup> for instance, never even acknowledged the existence of the manuscripts. So, for instance, Ertzdorff states that «*Handschriftliche Fassungen, die dem Druck als Vorlage gedient haben könnten, sind nicht bekannt*».<sup>28</sup> In this respect, it is quite surprising that other «*handschriftliche Fassungen*», not directly related to the early print, are not even hinted at. Another problematic question arising from Ertzdorff's paper concerns the work by Podleiszek<sup>29</sup> mentioned in her chapter as an edition of the *incunabulum* printed in Augsburg in 1481.<sup>30</sup> A rapid glance at the book actually reveals that the editor only transcribed the first text contained in the *incunabulum*, concluding his work on the early print just before the beginning of Marco Polo's text, which remained unedited. It follows that at present we do not have either sufficient studies on the DI branch or any transcription of the text, not to mention, of course, scholarly editions of it. Nevertheless, some precious information on DI was collected by Benedetto<sup>31</sup> (who was however not aware of the existence of Neustadt an der Aisch, Kirchenbibliothek, MS 28) and a few other scholars.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2. Describing the witnesses

DI is attested in five witnesses, all dating back to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>25</sup> See in particular Steidl, *Marco Polos*.

<sup>26</sup> Nürnberg, Fritz Creußner, 1477, BSB-Ink. P-671-6W M 34804.

<sup>27</sup> Nushdina, «Die Darstellung»; Ertzdorff, «Gedruckte Reiseberichte»; X. Ertzdorff, «Marco Polos "Beschreibung der Welt" im 14. Und 15. Jahrhundert in Deutschland», in G. Augst et al. (eds), *Festschrift für Heinz Engels zum 65. Geburtstag, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik* 561, Göppingen, 1991; F. Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China. Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen, Thorbecke Verlag, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Ertzdorff, «Marco Polos Beschreibung», p. 419.

<sup>29</sup> F. Podleiszek, *Volksbücher von Weltweite und Abenteuerlust*, Leipzig, Reclam, 1936 (Deutsche Literatur, 2).

<sup>30</sup> Augsburg, Anton Sorg, BSB-Ink. H-307-6W 12843.

<sup>31</sup> Benedetto, *Marco Polo*, pp. CXIV-CXIX.

<sup>32</sup> The other publications relevant here are Tschärner, *Der Mitteldeutsche*, Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo* and W. Achtnitz, *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter. Band 3: Reiseberichte und Geschichtsdichtung*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 308-313.

München, BSB cgm 696 is written in East Swabian, in bastarda script with red titles, decorated initials and flourished descending strokes, in particular in the last line of every folio. The codex also contains other texts: the *Buch von Troja* by Hans Mair von Nördlingen, some excerpts from the chronicle by Martin of Opava, some sections of the *Gesta Romanorum* and lists of kings, emperors, heroes and bishops. The account of Marco Polo's travels is the last and longest text in the manuscript, as it goes from f. 137r to f. 281v. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the manuscript belonged to the humanist Sigmund Gossembrot († 1493); later, in 1622, the same manuscript belonged to Johannes Wildenroder von München.

München, BSB cgm 252 is made up of 223 (plus VI) folios and it contains a very short fragment (ff. 90r to 94r) of the German translation DI, alongside with many other texts and fragments: while the first part of the manuscript focuses on travel literature, the rest of the collection consists of a brief Bible, a translation of a novella by Boccaccio (*Decamerone*, VI 1), the beginning of the *Melusine* by Thüring von Ringoltingen and many other shreds from diverse works. The excerpt from Marco Polo's text is written in East Swabian and only consists of the initial chapters, with a mutilated beginning. In this case as well, the script used is a hybrid and it presents some Gothic traits.

The third manuscript attesting DI is Neustadt (Aisch), Kirchenbibliothek, MS 28: unknown to Benedetto,<sup>33</sup> it is actually a copy of an *incunabulum* printed in Nürnberg by Fritz Creußner.<sup>34</sup> It contains different texts which are all connected by the theme of the pilgrimage and it was compiled at the behest of Ludwig von Eyb der Ältere (1417-1502): two of the texts contained in the manuscript namely tell about his two sons' pilgrimages.

Moving on to the *incunabula*, it is interesting to note that the *incunabulum* produced in Fritz Creußner's print house in Nürnberg in 1477 represents the very first version of Marco Polo's travel account to ever be printed. It is made up of 59 sheets and it only contains Marco Polo's text. This publication served as a model for the *incunabulum* printed in Augsburg in 1481, the latter also containing an illustrated story of Wilhelm von Österreich.

<sup>33</sup> Benedetto, *Marco Polo*.

<sup>34</sup> Gadrat Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo*, p. 49.

### 3.3. Connecting the witnesses

Given the fact that both MS 28 and the *incunabulum* of Augsburg were copied from the first print by Fritz Creußner, they will not be taken into consideration at this stage of the analysis, the priority being to determine the relative positions of the other three witnesses in the *stemma*.

3.3.1. *Cgm 696 and the incunabulum of Nürnberg*. On the basis of some considerations, principally on the *realia* contained in the text, it was already possible to exclude both the fact that cgm 696 was copied from the *incunabulum* of Nürnberg and that the latter was copied from the former.<sup>35</sup> Given the special status of *realia*, which behave like proper names in translation and scribal practice,<sup>36</sup> it is possible, if not to exclude, at least to reduce the potential of independent corrections on the part of the scribes, or of the printers in the case of the *incunabula*. Primary readings of anthroponyms, toponyms and other *realia* contained in the *incunabulum* and corresponding to secondary ones in cgm 696, for example, allow us to assume that the *incunabulum* cannot be a copy of the manuscript (TABLE 1). Namely, it is highly unlikely that the compiler possessed the necessary knowledge to intervene and correct deviant variants of those names, given that most of them were basically unknown to Western readers, and therefore also to the scribes.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, cgm 696 also shows a high number of variants of *realia* that are primary readings with respect to the correspondent ones in the *incunabulum* (TABLE 2). This can be considered as evidence of the fact that the scribe who transcribed the manuscript was not using the *incunabulum* as a model (as opposed to what is implied in *Handschriftencensus*, where it is suggested that cgm 696 might be a copy of an *incunabulum*<sup>38</sup>).

<sup>35</sup> A paper on the use of *realia* for the corroboration of stemmatic hypotheses is E. Cugliana, «On the traces of *realia* in the ENHG Marco Polo», *Filologia Germanica / Germanic Philology*, Supplemento 1, 2019, *Storiografia e letteratura nel Medioevo germanico / Historiography and Literature in the Germanic Middle Ages*, pp. 77-97.

<sup>36</sup> See, among others, I. Reginato, «I nomi propri come “fossili-guida” nello studio filologico-linguistico di un testo. Il caso della Versione K del *Devisement du Monde*», in M.P. Arpioni, A. Ceschin, G. Tomazzoli (eds), *Nomina sunt...? L'onomastica tra ermeneutica, storia della lingua e comparatistica*, Venezia, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2016, pp. 65-76.

<sup>37</sup> For the toponyms in particular see M. Cruse, «A Quantitative Analysis of Toponyms in a Manuscript of Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* (London, British Library, MS Royal 19 D 1)», *Speculum* s. I, a. 92, (2017), pp. 247-264.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/6261> [15/03/2019]. The two *incunabula* preserving DI are the ones of Nürnberg and Augsburg, the latter being a copy of the first one. It

The results of this study will clearly have to be confirmed by the application of a more canonical workflow derived from traditional stemmatology and by a full collation of the witnesses. The use of computer assisted methods will also be taken into consideration, although the small number of witnesses available will probably weaken the potential contribution offered by the use of cladistic algorithms.

A selection of the data used for the analysis is given below. In particular, TABLE 1 presents a place name (*Zetazi* in TB) and a person name (*lo Veglio*, TB) which are closer to the presumed model in the *incunabulum* of Nürnberg with respect to the reading in cgm 696, while TABLE 2 displays cases showing the opposite tendency:

TABLE 1  
Primary readings in the *incunabulum* ( $\neq$  MS).

TB	cgm 696	Nürnberg 1477
Zetazi	Zerafcz (f. 165v)	Zerazi (f. 13r)
Veglio	Lovelgio (f. 173r) Velgio (f. 176r) Felgio (f. 176 r)	Veglio (f. 13v <i>et seq.</i> )

TABLE 2  
Primary readings in the MS ( $\neq$  *incunabulum*).

TB	cgm 696	Nürnberg 1477
Muleta	Muleta (f. 173r) Mneta (f. 173r)	Avletta (f. 16r)
Temul	Temulo (f. 241r)	Tenolo (f. 32r)

If the compiler of the manuscript had had the *incunabulum* as a source, the reading *Avletta* would have probably been maintained. The conse-

follows that if the manuscript were really a *Druckabschrift*, the only possible candidate for its model would be the text printed by Fritz Creußner (or its copy, printed by Anton Sorg).

quence of the fact that such exotic names were probably not known in Europe is namely twofold: firstly, the ability of correcting the names on the part of the scribes was extremely limited and secondly it was very hard to determine whether the name was really spelt wrong, or whether the deviant forms were actually different names altogether.<sup>39</sup>

The results of the study on cgm 696 and the *incunabulum* were further confirmed by the analysis carried out in order to understand the relationship between the two complete witnesses of DI and the fragment. It is evident that there are reasons to believe that the fragment was not copied from either of the other two witnesses. Its antecedent might have been the same as the one that was used for both cgm 696 and Creußner's *incunabulum*, but it could also be the case that more than one copy of the original German text were in circulation (the translation is one and the same in all three witnesses) and that cgm 696 and the fragment descended from a common antecedent: this hypothesis will be discussed below. For now, the *stemma* will be kept as simple as possible, in order to give a faithful representation of our current knowledge, bearing in mind that, even at this stage, it remains a working hypothesis. In the next section, the arguments at the basis of the stemmatic configuration proposed in this paper will be presented.

3.3.2. *Loci critici in the three main witnesses.* The comparative analysis of the three witnesses allowed to identify some cases that were significant to distinguish the text contained in the fragment from both the manuscript and the *incunabulum*. One example is the agglutination of an anthroponym and a toponym: *Barach*, the name of a king, and *Buchera*, the city over which he reigned, which in the fragment are given as one single anthroponym, *Barachbuchera*. While the two names are explicitly separated by a middle dot in the *incunabulum*, cgm 696 shows the potential for a misunderstanding, which is fully realised in the fragment. Here the scribe needs to insert a new subject for the next sentence to make sense:

(4)

Der künig der ftat was genât Barach · Buchera ift die schômft ftat in allem perfia ·  
[incunabulum, f. 3r]

der künig ín der ftat was gehaifen Barach buchera ift die schönfte ftatt ín allem  
perfia [cgm 696, f. 140v]

<sup>39</sup> More on this topic in Cugliana, «On the traces».

Dar künig In der felben statt was gehaiffen Barachbucheꝛa Das ift die schönfte  
statt In allem perfia [cgm 252, f. 91r]

In (4) the fragment differs both from the manuscript and the *incunabulum*. The same applies to the name of the *Landherr* appointed by the Great Khan to accompany the Polo brothers on their journey back (he never made it to Italy as he died after 20 days of travelling): while he is called *Ghalgathal* in cgm 696 (f. 143v) and in the *incunabulum* (f. 4r), his name is *Ghalgathalle* in the fragment (f. 92v).

Another interesting case is given in (5): the paragraph in question is slightly different in each of the three witnesses:

(5)

der groẞ Cham an die zwen pꝛūd' pegeret das fy mit fambt einē feyner landt herñ  
| willig werñ | feyn potſchafft auß zurichten zu dem pabſt [incunabulum, f. 3v]

der grofe cham, an die zwen pꝛüder begerett, mit fampt ainem feinem lantheꝛn,  
willig weꝛñ, Sein potſchafft, zũ dem babſt zũ feín [cgm 696, f. 142v]

deꝛ Groß Chame an die zwen pꝛüdeꝛ begeꝛet mitt fampt ainem feinem lannther-  
ren · willig weren fein bottſchafft zũ dem bapſte, zũ werben vnd feine potten zũ  
fein [cgm 252, f. 92r]

It seems, in particular, that the fragment and the *incunabulum* are trying to offer a solution to a dubious passage in the original translation, which was probably similar to the version attested by cgm 696. The problem seems to be the sentence that, in cgm 696, reads: *willig weꝛñ, Sein potſchafft, zũ dem babſt zũ feín*. While the *incunabulum* presents the verb *richten*, which justifies the presence of the preposition *zu*, in the fragment the sentence is longer and it contains two verbs, *werben*, whose argument structure is the same as the one of the predicate used in the *incunabulum*, and the verb *sein*, which introduces a new object, that is, *seine potten*, which instead fits the syntactic requirements of the copula.

While cgm 696 has probably preserved the reading of the original in the case just analysed, it is not likely that it served as a model for the fragment. Again, the study of the *realia* could prove it: cgm 252 and the *incunabulum* agree in the forms of some place and person names, where cgm 696 presents some secondary readings. *Euchiacha* in the fragment (f. 90v) and the *incunabulum* (f. 3r), for example, appears as *Entiacha* in cgm 696 (f. 140r). Similarly, the toponym *Soria* occurs as *Seria* in

the manuscript (f. 144r), while the fragment presents the form *Soria* (f. 92v), like the *incunabulum* (f. 4r). Another relevant piece of evidence for the lack of dependency between the fragment and cgm 696 comes from the name of the prelate *Diebaldo*. Cgm 696 introduces him as follows: *der was genant Aifere Diebaldo von pianzenza* (f. 144r). Differently, both the fragment (f. 93r) and the *incunabulum* (f. 4v) present the correct form *Misere*, instead of *Aisere*. Given the context of a proper name, it is hard to suppose that the scribes could intervene and correct their models, whereas it seems acceptable to consider these examples as corroborating the stemmatic hypothesis presented in this paper.

Despite the minimal length of the fragment, Tschärner could already observe that the text contained here seems to preserve a better version of the DI translation than the other witnesses.<sup>40</sup> Some linguistic aspects emerging in the text seem to confirm his hypothesis: the language in cgm 252, as a matter of fact, shows a tendency towards older morphological structures and more conservative vocabulary (e.g. *reychtumbe* in cgm 252, f. 91r, vs. *reichtum* in cgm 696, f. 141r and the *incunabulum*, f. 3r; *kaysertūme* in the fragment, f. 91v vs. *kaysertūm*, in the MS f. 142r and f. 3v in the *incunabulum*; *zwirent*, f. 90r vs. *zwir* f. 139v and f. 3v respectively).

As for the relation between fragment and *incunabulum* in particular, it must be underlined that the possibility of the latter being the antecedent of the former is quite improbable, also due to the fact that the fragment is dated between 1455 and 1477<sup>41</sup> while the *incunabulum* was printed in Nürnberg in 1477, so the time span in which it could have been copied is extremely limited.

Moreover, some commonalities in the realisation of *realia* in cgm 252 and 696, as opposed to the readings in the *incunabulum*, seem to provide further evidence of the fact that the *incunabulum* did not serve as a model for the fragment: for instance, both the fragment (f. 90r) and cgm 696 (f. 139r) present the place name *Seldania*, where the *incunabulum* changes the root vowel in *Soldania* (f. 2v).

Fragment and manuscript, moreover, show a certain level of similarity in the following sentence, which seems to have undergone a process of correction, or at least reorganisation, in the *incunabulum*:

(6)

vnd das von vꝛ fach der groffen waffer keltē vnd schnee wegen [*incunabulum*, f. 4r]

<sup>40</sup> Tschärner, *Der Mitteldeutsche*, p. xvi.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/5999> [15/03/2019].

vnd das von urfache, der groffenn waffer kelten wegēn, vnd fchne wegē [cgm 696, f. 143v]

vnd das uon urfache deꝝ groffen waffer regen vnd schnee weḡn [cgm 252, f. 92v]

The intervention by the compiler of the *incunabulum* is justified by some lack of clarity that must have characterised the original translation. While the sentence in cgm 696 shows a repetition happening on the word level, with the preposition *wegen* appearing twice, the repetition in cgm 252 is rather on the level of meaning, in the juxtaposition of *wasser* and *regen*. So if on the one hand the *incunabulum* presents a rather elegant, but also slightly rearranged structure, it is only through the comparison of the three witnesses that we can retrace all the elements that must have been in the original translation: once again, the scribe does not seem to have intervened much in cgm 696 to improve the text being copied, leaving all inconsistencies and irregularities. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the word *kelten* was already present in the original text and that before the conjunction there was the word *wegen* or *regen*.

Another case showing that the model for cgm 252 was not the *incunabulum* is the following sequence:

(7)

Aber nicholo polo fandt fein hauß frawē tod die er fwanger gelaffen het do er von ir fchid doch het fie im gelaffen einē iungē fun | der was geheiffen Marcho polo dē fein vater noch nicht gefecheu het [incunabulum, f. 4v]

Aber nicholo polo fein haußfrawen tode fand, die Er fchwanger gelaffen hett, Ainen Jungen fun der gehaiffen was Märcho polo, den fein vatter noch nit gefecheu hette [cgm 696, f. 144v]

Aber Nicholo polo sein haußfrawē todt fandt Die er schwangeꝝ gelaffē hette, ainen Iungē sūn der gehaiffē was Märcho polo, den fein vatter noch nicht gefecheu hette [cgm 252, f. 93r]

It is clear that the printed version of the text provides an expansion of the note concerning Nicolo's wife, which is meant to render explicit the fact that she was actually Marco's mother: the other two witnesses, on the other hand, present an asyndetic coordination of the two objects (wife and son), which results in a less elegant and maybe rather confusing structure. It seems however acceptable to consider the latter as having been part of the original translation.

The last case presented here is again a proper name, *Guilielme de Tripule* (in the reading of F<sup>42</sup>). He was one of the two friars who should have accompanied the Polos to the Great Khan and who never made it to China, not daring to continue that perilous journey. In the DI branch, his name appears in different forms: *wilhalm von tripolj* in cgm 696 (f. 146r), *wilhalm von tripolj* in cgm 252 (f. 94r) and *quigliclino von tripoli* in the *incunabulum* (5r). While the two manuscripts give a German translation of the name, something remarkable happens in the *incunabulum*, for which there seems to be, however, a palaeographic explanation: the name *Quigliclino*, in fact, does not exist as a name, but graphically it is extremely close to *Guglielmo*. FIG. 5 shows how the name *Quigliclino* (cut into two parts by the line break) appears in the *incunabulum*: if compared to what the name *Guglielmo* must have looked like in bastarda handwriting (for an abstraction cf. FIG. 6)<sup>43</sup>, it is clear how close the shapes of the glyphs composing the two names are.

FIGURE 5

*Incunabulum* of Nürnberg, f. 5r.

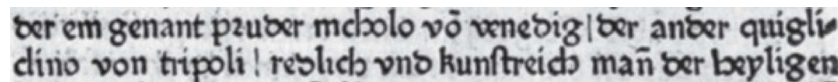


FIGURE 6

Graphic model: *Guglielmo* vs. *Quigliclino*.

Guglielmo  
Quigliclino

Apart from the first <i> in the name *Quigliclino*, the number of vertical strokes in the two words corresponds perfectly, and also the curves are

<sup>42</sup> Cf. the entry *Guilmo da Tripoli* in the *Lemmario* of Burgio, Buzzoni, Ghersetti, *Dei Viaggi* (<http://virgo.unive.it/ecf-workflow/books/Ramusio/main/lemmario.html>).

<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, we do not possess the witness of TB used for the establishment of DI, so it is not possible to rely on concrete evidence.

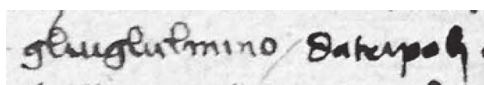
in the right places. So, for example, it is quite easy to mistake a <G> for a <Q>, or an <e> for a <c>. If on the one hand *Quigliclino* rhymes with *Guglielmino*, the former is graphically closer to *Guglielmo*.

Hence, it could be assumed that the reading in the original translation was *Guglielmo*, but two problems are related to this hypothesis: first, it could imply that cgm 696 and 252 have innovated in the same way, but independently from one another, which might of course be possible, but it would be quite surprising, if one considers that rendering the proper names with their German correspondents is not so common in either of the two manuscripts. Following this line of reasoning, one should assume that the two manuscripts were copied from a common model different from the one used for the *incunabulum*, but at present there is not sufficient evidence for this hypothesis to be scientifically proven. It will be necessary to verify whether Guglielmo da Tripoli, who was not only a friar but also an author,<sup>44</sup> was known in southern Germany at the time in which the manuscripts were copied, that is, in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. If that was true, then the reading “Wilhelm” in cgm 696 and 252 could be a polygenetic innovation. However, the name was surely not recognised by the compiler of the *incunabulum*, which was printed in 1477 and is therefore contemporary with the other two witnesses.

The second problem has to do with the reading of TB. The manuscript used as the basis for Amatucci's critical text calls the friar in a peculiar way, that is, *gliuglulmino datripolj* (although the sequence <iu> cannot be identified with certainty, as it might also be <ui>). Here is how the name appears in the manuscript:

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FIGURE 7  
Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Palat. 590, f. 2v.




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Amatucci's edition, however, only presents the name *Guglielmo*, without reporting any other variants in the apparatus.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, there is

<sup>44</sup> He wrote a treatise on the Saracens (for a critical edition and German translation of the text see P. Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis: Notitia de Machometo. De statu Sarracenorum*, Würzburg-Altenberge, Echter-Oros, 1992).

<sup>45</sup> Amatucci, «La redazione toscana B», p. 9.

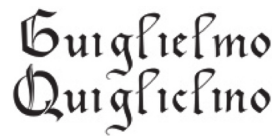
no commentary explaining where the reading *Guglielmo* is taken from (or whether it was merely introduced by the editor to correct the mistake in the manuscript).

What the name could have looked like in the Tuscan witness from which the German translation was derived, remains uncertain, but it is tempting to hypothesise a slightly different reading for TB, (or at least for the witness of TB that served as a model for DI), that is, *Guiglielmo*. The presence of a diphthong in the first syllable would in fact be in line with the reading of VA and of other branches of Marco Polo's textual tradition.<sup>46</sup> This would explain even better the deviant reading *Quigliclino* in the *incunabulum*, as FIG. 8 clearly shows.

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FIGURE 8

Graphic model: *Guiglielmo* vs. *Quigliclino*.<sup>47</sup>




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In this case, each glyph in *Guiglielmo* could be easily mistaken for the correspondent one in *Quigliclino*. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the reading in the original translation, and probably in its Tuscan source text, was actually *Guiglielmo*. The latter would then undergo a process of adaptation to the German onomastic system in cgm 696 and 252 and acquire the form of *Wilhalm*.

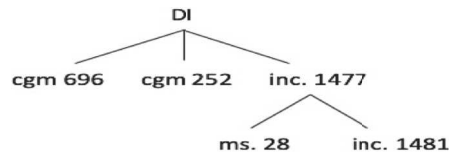
3.3.4. *Proposed stemma(ta)*. The *stemma* of DI deriving from this study is the one presented in FIG. 9:

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<sup>46</sup> In the relevant entry of the *Lemmario* in the aforementioned digital scholarly edition by Burgio, Buzzoni and Gheretti, the variants for the name in question are the following: «Guilielme de Tripule» F; «de Tripoli nomine Guillelmus» L; «Guilielmus tripolitanus» P; «Vielmo de Tripoli» V; «Guilmo da Tripolli» VA; «Guiellmo da Tripolli» VB.

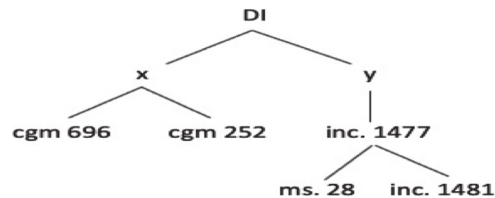
<sup>47</sup> Many thanks to Patrick Sahle for the interesting discussion and suggestions.

FIGURE 9  
DI branch: basic hypothesis.



This is clearly just a working hypothesis: other configurations, involving for instance the presence of *codices interpositi* intervening between the primary translation and the attested witnesses, could also be considered. For now, the available evidence is not enough to exclude the *stemma* in FIG. 9 in favour of a more complex structure, but it seems reasonable to suggest that cgm 252 and cgm 696 might have actually been copied from a common witness x, which could have been on the same level of another *codex interpositus* y, situated between DI and the *incunabulum* (the existence of the latter having already been considered by Benedetto<sup>48</sup>). If that was the case, the *stemma* would look like the one in FIG. 10.

FIGURE 10  
DI branch with *codices interpositi*.



Grouping the fragment together with cgm 696 would be justified by cases like the last one discussed above: given the reading *Guiglielmo* for TB, it is tempting to assume that the common reading “Wilhelm” in cgm 696 and cgm 252 was introduced by a common antecedent. It seems less probable that the two witnesses innovated in the same way independently, given that other proper names are usually not translated, but this has to be further investigated, as mentioned above. Moreover, both wit-

<sup>48</sup> Benedetto, *Marco Polo*, p. cxv.

nesses are written in East-Swabian, while the language of the *incunabulum* is Bavarian. This last piece of evidence is however less meaningful, as the dialectal variety of the first translation is unknown and we cannot exclude that it was already East-Swabian itself. If this was the case, the argument would of course lose relevance.

As already mentioned, the stemmatic hypotheses put forward in this article will be the object of further analysis involving more traditional methods, as well as a full-text collation of the witnesses and, possibly, the application of cladistic algorithms. Unfortunately, however, the brevity of the fragment will remain an obstacle to the establishment of a solid *stemma* for DI.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

This article investigated the medieval German translation DI of Marco Polo's travel narrative, suggesting possible solutions for some crucial philological questions, while raising some others. It was shown that it is implausible for the three main witnesses of DI to have been copied from one another. A few *loci critici* were chosen to corroborate the stemmatic hypotheses put forward in the discussion: most of the cases analysed involved toponyms, anthroponyms and other *realia*, which, due to their peculiar behaviour in translation and scribal practice, prove to be extremely useful to understand dependencies and connections, or lack thereof, in the textual tradition of a work. However, whether an additional level of *codices interpositi* should be hypothesised still remains to be confirmed, especially due to the brevity of the fragment, which represents a limitation to the amount of evidence available.

The *stemma(ta)* presented in this article are at the basis of a digital scholarly edition of version DI of the *Devisement dou Monde*, a joint research project between Ca' Foscari University of Venice and the Cologne Center for eHumanities (CCeH, Universität zu Köln), which is being carried out by the author of the present paper. Both the stemmatic configuration proposed and the edition represent innovative developments in the field of Marco Polo's studies. Version DI is, as a matter of fact, another fragment in the puzzle of Marco Polo's manuscript tradition and studying its peculiarities will not only contribute to our understanding of the German text itself, but also of the Tuscan version TB, as was shown above in at least two cases.

In particular, the choice of the digital environment for the project just mentioned is driven by the singularity of DI's textual transmission,

which took place almost contemporaneously in two different *media*: manuscripts and *incunabula*. Already the “bifid” conformation of the *stemma* would create some problems in terms of the establishment of a critical text, but the situation is worsened by the fact that the two major witnesses (cgm 696 and the *incunabulum* of Nürnberg) belong to two different editorial traditions: this has an impact on the texts themselves and weakens the effectiveness of their collation – suffice it to refer here to the levelling of the variance in the *incunabulum*, with respect to the manuscript, shown in the discussion above. It follows that the edition of DI necessarily needs to grant the reader multiple (and dynamic) access to the text, which is more easily done in digital form, rather than on paper. For this reason, a specifically tailored version of EVT 2<sup>49</sup> was chosen as an environment for the digital edition. This tool favours, among other things, the juxtaposition of different versions of the same text, which is particularly helpful in the case of traditions like the one presented in this paper. On the one hand, a synoptic view of the three main witnesses allows to compare the texts more easily, for instance as far as their linguistic facies is concerned. On the other, it shows the influence of the *medium* on its textual content:<sup>50</sup> while the manuscript shows a rather unpolished copy, characterised by an abundance of flaws and variance, the *incunabulum* presents a more definite text, which already appears as more modern and readable, more in line with today's press practices. This is ultimately user friendly too: the reader is free to choose which (attested) form of the text better suits his or her needs.

Moreover, the edition will also present each witness individually, showing the *continuum* from the facsimile to its interpretative edition, going through different levels of normalisation of the same text, which are obtained through a semi-automatized process. However, this and the many other innovative traits characterising this editorial project will be the subject of another paper (and of the author's PhD thesis).

#### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the still unedited German version known as DI of Marco Polo's travel narrative. In particular, a *stemma* of branch DI is proposed

<sup>49</sup> R. Rosselli Del Turco et al., *Edition Visualization Technology*, <http://evt.labcd.unipi.it> [13/01/2020].

<sup>50</sup> Specifically, I am not referring to the layout of the pages, but to the actual practices and traditions belonging to the different editorial contexts.

here for the first time, establishing the basis for a (digital) scholarly edition of the text. The latter represents the outcome of a project that the author of this study is carrying out in an international collaboration. While some branches of the stemma representing Marco Polo's textual transmission have been extensively studied, the medieval German version DI has not enjoyed much scholarly attention. This is quite remarkable, given its significance not only for the German context per se, but also for the study of (at least) the Tuscan version TB, which was the source text of the German translation. Specifically, the establishment of a critical text for TB cannot ignore the readings of DI, as is shown in this contribution. Although DI has come to us in two manuscripts, one fragment and two incunabula, many of the scholars who have dealt with the German translation in question, such as Ertzdorff (1992) and Nushdina (2004), have not even acknowledged the existence of manuscript witnesses attesting the DI version, limiting their observations to the text conveyed by one incunabulum. It follows that no stemma has ever been proposed for DI: the present article attempts therefore to fill this gap and to shed new light on DI's textual tradition, through an analysis of the characteristics of the extant witnesses and their relationships.

*Keywords*

Marco Polo; *Milione*; *Devisement du monde*; manuscript tradition; German version DI.