

# Sanudo's Vision, Vesconte's Expertise, and the Ghost Hand: Reception of the Maps in the MS Additional 27376

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### *Sanudo's Vision, Vesconte's Expertise, and the Ghost Hand: Reception of the Maps in the MS Additional 27376*

Written between 1306 and 1321 by a man named Marino Sanudo, the *Book of Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross*, or *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis* in Latin, is a confluence of politics and history set across a backdrop of crusading as a religious imperative.<sup>i</sup> More than twenty extant manuscript copies exist (Tyerman 2013, 129). The MS Additional 27376 in the British Library, thought to date from 1331 (The British Library, n.d.) contains original portolans and maps in the back of the volume as part of the work, and the secondary annotations in the book speak to one aspect of critical reception. In the lengthy volume, Sanudo outlines a plan for a successful crusade to take back the Holy Land, which he wrote following a series of Christian defeats in the thirteenth century (Tyerman 1982, 59). The proposal starts with a plan to blockade Egypt, followed by the logistics of sailing and pragmatic information about keeping the sailors healthy during the invasion. It also contains contextual information, such as the political influences in the Holy Land and the history of Jerusalem. In nine of the twenty extant copies of the *Book of Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross* (henceforth, the *Secreta*), there are portolans and maps, including multiple iterations of a map of the Holy Land (Tyerman 2013, 129). The workshop of Pietro Vesconte produced many of these, which Sanudo commissioned specifically to accompany the

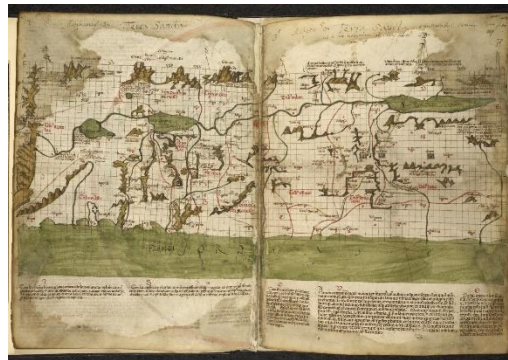
volume (Edson 2010, 510-11). After he authored the text, Sanudo paid illuminators to make additional copies. He then gave the finished manuscripts out as gifts to important people who might be sympathetic to his cause, including Pope Clement V and King Robert of Naples (Tyerman 1982, 57-61).

The maps that Vesconte made to accompany the work offer a dimension of authority to the volume, and the multiple hands that have contributed to the work, both during its making and after, speaks to the object's social life.<sup>ii</sup> The maps delineate Sanudo's goals, Vesconte's accumulated knowledge about the world both Mediterranean and beyond, and the presence of an unknown third reader, who I am calling the ghost hand, who annotated the volume, especially the maps, extensively. The maps underwent a transformation every time someone used them, and they stand not just for themselves, but for the contemporary understanding of the geography of the time, compounded by their interactions with the world thus far. When all of these factors are taken into consideration, the maps have the power to reveal not just Sanudo as an author and a lobbyist, but a persuasive actor. Sanudo was directly involved with the manuscripts,<sup>iii</sup> and I take it as a given that Sanudo commissioned these maps from Vesconte directly, revealing

intertwining modes of authorship. I will argue for the portolan charts and maps as an integral part of Sanudo's design, functioning both to aid navigation as well as to make political statements about the borders of the Christian world and who owns the Holy Land. I will also return to the inscriptions that a second ghost hand wrote to speculate about who may have written in the Additional 27376, why, and what this use may tell us about the object's social life as it circulated in the world. In short, I view the maps as an integral part to Sanudo's persuasive powers, and I will use them to reframe Sanudo's historical impact.

The MS Tanner 190 in the Bodleian Library, and the MSS Vaticani Latini 2972 and Palatini Latini 1362 in the Vatican Library, are all copies of the *Secreta* dated between 1321 and 1329. They provide logical points of comparison to the MS Additional 27376.<sup>iv</sup> All four manuscripts are in excellent condition, and three share many illuminated miniatures in common. The maps included in all volumes are especially telling. Although the Tanner 190, Vaticani Latini 2972, and Palatini Latini 1362 all have fewer maps than the Additional 27376, the maps that they do contain are remarkably similar to those found in the Additional 27376. Side by side, the map of the Holy Land from the Additional 27376 (figure 1), the map of the Holy Land from the Tanner 190 (figure 2), and the map of the Holy Land in the Palatini Latini 1362 (figure 3) share many features in common. The Mediterranean is at the bottom, and a series of smaller seas connected by a river fill the upper half of the map. The mountain ranges, cities, and towns are all placed in roughly the same areas. The mapmakers used the same color scheme: water is green, the landmass is the color of the parchment,

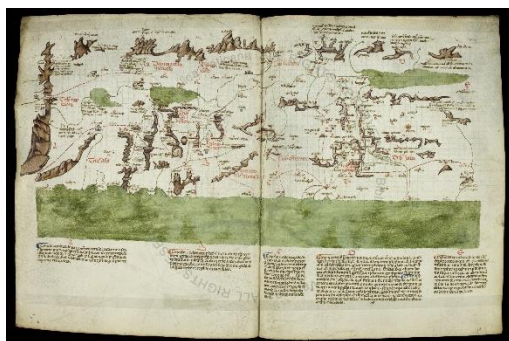
and the features have been drawn in with a dark brown ink. Some inscriptions are in red. The text at the bottom on both manuscripts begins, "Tota terra a monte Libano planus occidentale Jordanus usque," which roughly translates to "The entire earth away from Mount Libano is flat up until west Jordan,"<sup>v</sup> (MS Tanner 190, fol. 205v-206r; MS Additional fol. 188v-189r, map of the Holy Land.) The most obvious difference between the two earlier maps and the later one in the Additional 27376 is that the lattermost has more labels and sections, even if the text at the bottom appears to be largely the same. All of these maps are attributed to the workshop of Vesconte, and it is entirely possible that, because it is a later copy, he was able to update the information about the Holy Land for the map accompanying the Additional 27376.



**Figure 1**  
**Map of the Holy Land, The British Library, MS Additional 27376, fol. 188v-189r.**



**Figure 2**  
Map of the Holy Land, The British Library, MS Tanner 190, fol. 205v-206r.



**Figure 3**  
Map of the Holy Land, MS Palatini Latini 1362, fol. 7v-8r.

Another, more striking difference speaks to the unique social life of the Additional 27376. It is apparent from the side-by-side comparison of these manuscripts that a second person, or ghost hand, took extensive notes in the Additional 27376. The identity of the second person is unknown. Whereas the other manuscripts have much fewer later additions, the entire Additional 27376 has been annotated. This is most obvious at the top of the map on folio 188v where the owner of the ghost hand appears to have misspelled “mappa mundi” as “mapa mundus” and put “mundus” in the wrong case (figure 4). The second hand also wrote more clearly the words “Terra sancta”

near the center top of the folio. At the bottom of the folio, in red ink, the original scribe labeled each textual section with a letter that corresponds to the grid on the map, and the second hand added arrows at the top of the map demonstrating on the grid where each section falls, a clarifying gesture most clearly seen where they wrote the letter B on the upper right side of the folio. Additionally, several labels that the second hand added are in Italian or Catalan, not Latin, and some Latin nouns in Latin inscriptions appear to be in the wrong case. The second set of handwriting adds a dimension of audience-as-author that demonstrates the perceived value of the work to someone who reacted strongly to the maps in Sanudo’s volume.



**Figure 4**  
Map of the Holy Land, detail of the phrase “Terra Sancta”, The British Library, MS Additional 27376, fol. 188v.

### The Maps as Territory and Destination

It is worthwhile to consider the crusades in general, and Sanudo’s preoccupation with the Holy Land specifically. Born in Venice sometime between 1260 and 1270, Marino Sanudo, often called Torsello, was a member of a patrician family with mercantile interests (Edson 2007, 60; Lock 2014, 135-37). He may have lived in Acre as a young man in the 1280s when it was held by Christians

(Tyerman 1982, 57-59), though there is no evidence that he ever went into Jerusalem itself, which was under Muslim control (Davis, 2013, 101-3; Tyerman 2006, 4-5) Turkish Mamluk forces took Acre in 1291, seizing the territories briefly held by the Latins (Tyerman 1982, 58). Perhaps Sanudo was affected by the loss. Around 1306, he began writing about crusades with his work *Conditiones Terrae Sanctae*. He continued to travel for mercantile work, and ventured as far as the Baltic Sea, where he made a point to compare what he knew about Mediterranean sailing with the maritime techniques of the people he encountered in the north (Tyerman 1982, 60). Sanudo's travels may have in turn influenced the *mappae mundi* that accompanied the *Secreta*, although it is unclear how much he collaborated with Vesconte.

It is not known when Sanudo started and finished writing the *Secreta*, but he seems to have completed a first draft of the work by 1322, when political events caused him to circulate and promote his cause more fervently (Tyerman 1982, 61). In fact, the *Secreta* manuscripts in the Vatican Library as well as the Tanner 190 were plausibly compiled around this time. Between the years of 1322 and his death in 1343, Sanudo never stopped traveling, meeting his contacts, arguing for the finer points of how to launch a successful crusade, and gifting copies of the *Secreta* to important individuals (Tyerman 1982, 62-65). There is evidence between copies that Sanudo also revised the *Secreta* at least twice (The British Library, n.d.). It seems likely that Sanudo, with mercantile interests in Venice, stood to gain monetarily from crusading, which may have been part of his motivation. The *Secreta* details Sanudo's technical plans for taking back the Holy Land and can be

understood as the literary manifestation of his lobbying and a demonstration of his expertise. Sanudo put decades of work into his writing.

It is therefore not surprising that Sanudo was particular about the maps he commissioned, and that he repeatedly returned to Vesconte's workshop. All four volumes discussed in this article have maps attributed to the workshop of Pietro Vesconte.<sup>vi</sup> Three have the aforementioned map of the Holy Land, there are portolans in all but the Tanner 190, there is a map of Acre in all but the Vatican Latini 2972, and all four *Secreta* manuscripts contain an unusual *mappa mundi*. At first glance, the *mappae mundi* all appear to be based on earlier *mappa mundi* forms. They are divided down the bottom center by the Mediterranean, all have thin encircling oceans around roughly three continents, and they are all oriented to the east, with Europe on the bottom left, Africa on the bottom right, and Asia taking up the top half of the map. This eastern-oriented world of three continents also dates back to Isidore, with the world growing more elaborate in later medieval T-O maps that document a three-part world with Asia at the top. The inscription for Jerusalem is small and difficult to read, but nonetheless it is in the center of the map, where it became standard during the thirteenth century on T-O maps to place it (Safi 2015, 262-63). Gog and Magog are present in the northern section of the maps, which is another common trope of T-O maps, but they are given no image as they often are on *mappae mundi*, and their inscription is difficult to find among the various placenames (Edson 2007, 65). The resemblance between these four *mappae mundi* and earlier medieval *mappae mundi* is evident in the layout of the world



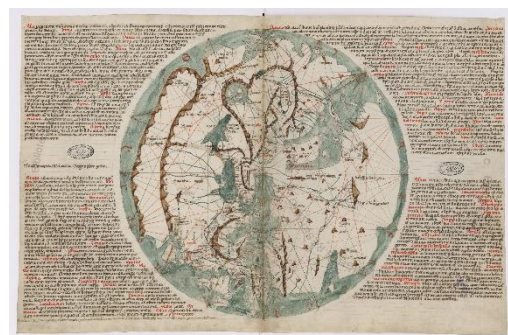
as well as the placement of familiar features.

However, despite some characteristics in common with earlier *mappae mundi*, all of these maps incorporate knowledge about the world not typically found before the fourteenth century. The Tanner 190 *mappa mundi* (figure 5), Vaticani Latini 2972 *mappa mundi* (figure 6), Palatini Latini 1362 *mappa mundi* (figure 7), and the Additional 27376 *mappa mundi* (figure 8), are all slightly different from each other, but they are alike in their differences from earlier maps. Pietro Vesconte may have been the first mapmaker to incorporate features of the portolan chart into the *mappa mundi* (Unger 2010, 46; Edson 2010, 510-11), including the rhumb lines around the circumference and of the Additional, Vat.Lat., and Pal.Lat maps, and the curve of the African and European coastlines on all four maps that resembles the coastlines from portolan charts (Edson 2007, 65). Another notable feature, the inclusion of Mecca near the center of the map in the top-right quadrant, suggests Arab influence (Unger 2010, 46), though the exact maps that Vesconte may have looked at are still being debated (Edson 2007, 68-70). Missing from all maps are the marvelous creatures, any references to Jesus, Paradise or the Garden of Eden, and most other historical/religious imagery, such as the Tower of Babel. On medieval and early modern *mappae mundi*, the representation of Jerusalem, which was rarely held by Christians, often includes Christianizing elements, such as representations of the Holy Sepulchre (Scafi 2015 259-61). These elements are entirely absent from Vesconte's *mappae mundi*. In all cases, the *mappa mundi* transitions from the world as a canvas for expressing historical and biblical ideas to a document promoting

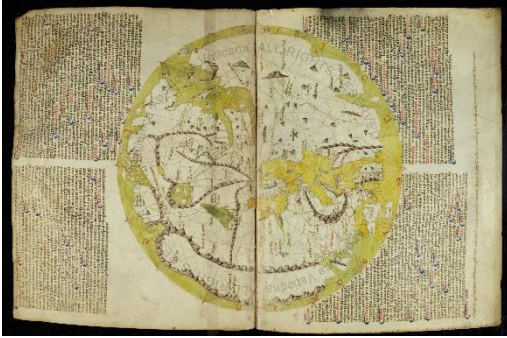
accumulated knowledge of place and property. As objects, these maps assert the primacy of the Holy Land by continuing to center it within the known world, but the format of the rest of the map relies on knowledge of the navigable world.



**Figure 5**  
*Mappa mundi*, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 190, fol. 203v-204r.



**Figure 6**  
*Mappa mundi*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vaticani Latini 2972, fol. 112v-113r.



**Figure 7**  
MS Palatini Latini 1362, fol. 1v-2r,  
*mappa mundi*.



**Figure 8**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 187v-188r,  
*mappa mundi*.

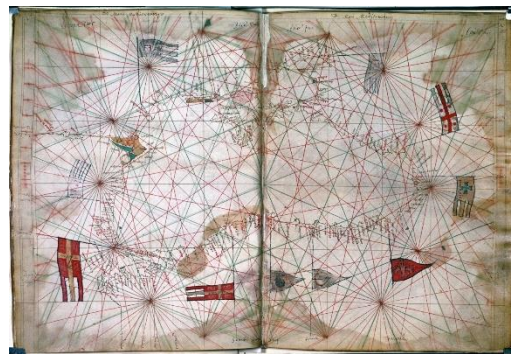
Mecca is a strange inclusion, as is Scandinavia, which appears on the bottom-left of the map. Unger writes that Scandinavia did not appear on Italian maps until the early fourteenth century (2010, 46), and William Boelhower argues that Vesconte may have been a sailor who knew about Scandinavia and other faraway places from travel accounts (2018, 281). The upper-right quadrant features India as well as dozens of little islands that probably represent the origins of the spice trade (Edson 2007, 65). These are not usually included on earlier *mappae mundi* and point to Arab sources (Boelhower 2018, 279-80). In short, the argument that Vesconte's *mappa mundi* is the result of

syncretism between older *mappae mundi* forms and Italian mapmaking practices, is cogent. For Sanudo to then choose Vesconte's syncretic *mappa mundi* indicates an appeal to secular authorities about the state of the world and who owns it. Sanudo's project may have included legitimating Christian claims to the Holy Land, but the maps demonstrate expertise in geography and navigation, lending an early modern cosmopolitanism to Sanudo's work.

The Tanner 190 may have been the oldest copy of the work out of the four discussed in this article, and the *mappa mundi* in it appears to have been updated in the other three volumes. The most obvious change to the later *mappae mundi* is the inclusion of rhumb lines. The Additional 27376 also has a compass rose at the north end of the map on the left side, serving as a locus for the rhumb lines at that point. Nine rhumb lines extend from each of sixteen equidistant points on the circumference of the map. The Tanner 190 *mappa mundi* also has a lot fewer place names on it; on the Additional 27376 *mappa mundi*, all the extra information nearly obscures the Mediterranean entirely. It appears as though Vesconte updated his template used for his previous *mappa mundi* and attempted to lend the map more authority by including the rhumb lines, which Boelhower nonetheless argues were "purely symbolic," (2018, 282) or non-functional. Pushing this idea further, Vesconte's *mappa mundi* was incompatible with contemporary navigation practices, but the inclusion of rhumb lines is a statement of potential. Portolan charts were used for navigation, so making a *mappa mundi* resemble a portolan chart asserts that a previously foreign world formerly populated by marvelous creatures at the margins but presently

devoid of them is indeed knowable, navigable, and conquerable.<sup>vii</sup>

The Tanner 190 in its current form does not contain any portolan charts, which may indicate that Sanudo only started commissioning them for later copies of his manuscript. The Palatini Latini 1362 contains two portolan charts, and the Vaticanani Latini 2972 and Additional 27376 both contain several, documenting shorelines from all over Europe and the Mediterranean. The portolan chart of the Black Sea in the Additional 27376 (figure 9) is fairly standard for a portolan chart in Unger's description: it has multiple loci for the rhumb lines arranged geometrically. Each locus radiates four black lines running perpendicular to the edge of the map for the four cardinal directions, or winds, with eight green lines for the half winds and sixteen red lines for the quarter winds. The chart is oriented to the north, and it centers on the Black Sea. The body of water is largely blank, with the names of ports inscribed inland on the shoreline (Unger 2010, 43-44; Monmonier 2004, 17-20). Although earlier and later maps often color in bodies of water to differentiate them from land, portolans use color very sparingly, reserving it for important features of the chart. The only decorative element of the chart are the flags on the outside of the map. The heraldry belongs to Constantinople and surrounding states (The British Library, n.d.). Based on Unger's argument, this chart would have been functional to a navigator familiar with this technology.



**Figure 9**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 184v-185r,  
portolan chart of the Black Sea.

An ongoing question with Sanudo's manuscripts specifically and surviving portolan charts in general is the curious lack of wear on the actual documents. As Edson observes, very few surviving portolans show pricking, later annotation describing a route, or saltwater stains. (Edson 2007, 57-58). The maps in the Tanner 190 are in remarkably good condition, and likely they never saw practical use. The maps in the other three volumes do have some wear, particularly on the Mediterranean Sea on the *mappae mundi*, but it is not obvious that the books ever travelled on the ocean or aided in navigation. Nonetheless, the inclusion of portolans as a functional object bespeaks to two processes: one, direct navigation while sailing at sea, but two, more importantly for Sanudo's goals, actually planning a route before the voyage,<sup>viii</sup> which may account for why so many portolans appear to have not been used directly for navigation. One can imagine Sanudo opening the manuscript to the map, showing his interlocutor two points, and using the map to describe the feasibility of getting there. Even if the point was rhetorical and Sanudo had no intention of arguing for sailing the Black Sea, the portolans are included as authoritative documents intended to be handled and used not just



for navigation, but for planning. Their utility in two dimensions echoes the utility of Sanudo's plans at large.

I ascertain from these maps more deliberation on Sanudo's part. The number of surviving maps signed by Vesconte indicate that his workshop was prolific (Campbell 1986, 67-94), and his maps must have been in high demand. The maps repeated in various volumes, as well as the standardization among the maps appearing more than once, indicate that Sanudo was a repeat client, likely with very specific ideas about what he wanted. The inclusion of the portolans and what appear to be updates in three volumes indicate that Sanudo's work evolved over time. Sanudo speaks in the entire manuscript in a voice of authority, and the maps lend weight to that authority, especially following the updates that Vesconte's workshop added to later editions. Whether or not the maps were functional to a fourteenth-century navigator is nearly orthogonal to the point: these books were not for sailors or captains, but rather for members of a financing class who needed to be persuaded that Sanudo had a viable strategy. Sanudo took extra care with the inclusion of the maps to lend authority to his work.

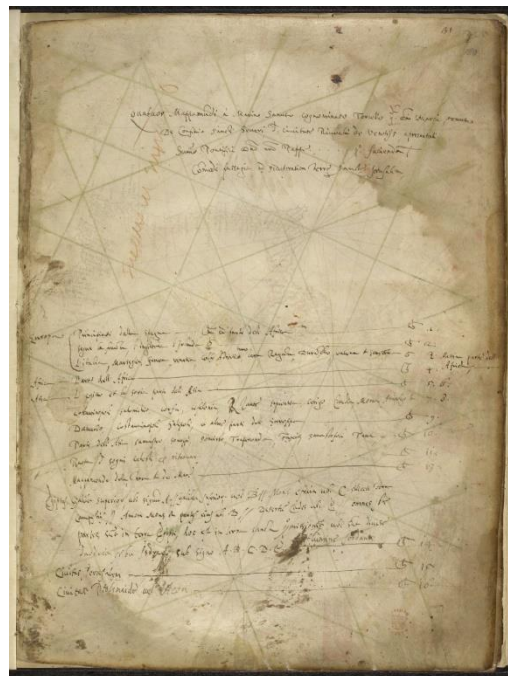
Furthermore, building on the idea of authority, the maps that Sanudo commissioned for this work demonstrate the feasibility of his plan irrespective of their utility. In the Tanner 190, Sanudo includes a *mappa mundi*, a map of the Holy Land, and a map specifically of Jerusalem and Acre proper, arguably to aid in interpretation of his work and reiterate the importance of the Holy Land. The Additional 27376 appears to be a more fervent effort as Sanudo includes portolans of the area designed for navigation, an

expanded *mappa mundi* that includes regions of the world hitherto excluded on the *mappa mundi*, and an updated Holy Land map with more detail. Much work has been done about maps as political documents in the Middle Ages, and Sanudo embodies that tradition here. In the *Secreta*, he divided the world into East and West and expressed many anti-Muslim sentiments in both his written works and his personal letters (Lock 2014, 140). The Turks, in particular, held a special prominence in his plans, but he also mentioned Saracens in general, Mamluks, Agarenes, and anyone else affiliated with Saladin (Lock 2014, 149). Although the maps in these manuscripts communicate navigability and an understanding of how places in the world relate to one other, they are also statements about the world and who has rights to it. Not only is Sanudo seeking to argue about the logistics of taking the Holy Land, but he also makes statements about ownership of the Holy Land and the world at large through its representation in a costly book.

### **The Lives of the Maps in the Ghost's Hands**

Up to this point, I have described the maps in the *Secreta* volumes and how they fit into Sanudo's visions of crusading and the Holy Land. What remains of his efforts are a collection of manuscripts, some in fragments, documenting his life's work. In the Additional 27376, there is rare indication of what his contacts thought about his work. As mentioned previously, a ghost hand wrote on multiple folios in the Additional 27376, possibly on all of them. The handwriting is distinct from the original text of the *Secreta* as well as the writing on the maps. Their notes are mostly in the margins, but there are occasional interpolations in the text.

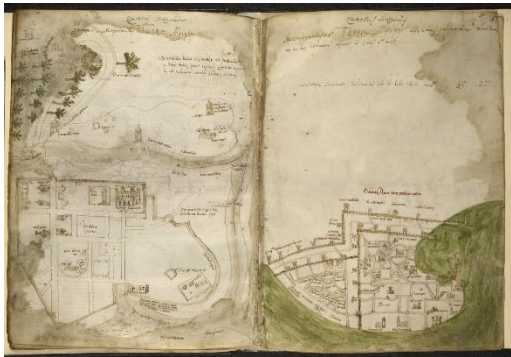
Folio 180r (figure 10) typifies the notes taken by the second hand; the top line reads, “Quator mappamundi a Marino Sanuto cognominato Torcello,” or “Four world maps by Marino Sanudo called Torsello,” with “quattuor” spelled unconventionally, the “n” above “mudi” where it appears as though they caught themselves in the misspelling, and the rest of the line in what appears to be shorthand or abbreviations (fol. 180r). The last word appears to be “Sanuto” again but crossed out. Further down the page, they appear to have made a table of contents for the maps that will follow, dividing the world into Europe, Africa, and Asia in lines with numbers at the end of the line. The second to last line reads, “Civitas Jerusalem,” with the contemporary spelling Jerusalem in the nominative (as opposed to genitive) case, followed by a long line, an abbreviation they use repeatedly that seems to mean “page,” and the number 15 (fol. 180r). The last line reads, “Civitates Ptolemaidis [?] Acor,” also followed by a long line, the page abbreviation, and the number 16 (fol. 180r). Curiously, they put “Ptolemais,” the Latin name for Acre, in the (correct) genitive case, which is “Ptolemaidis.” Additionally, “Acor” may be an alternative spelling for “Acre.” Accordingly, the last two maps in the volume are of the Holy Land and Acre. Other city names stand out, including Constantinople as an entry under Asia.



**Figure 10**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 180r, handwritten notes about the maps.

Although most of the handwriting is difficult to read and much of it is in shorthand, the writing on fol. 180r is standard for the ghost hand's notes: they write in Latin, with some updated place names, and their spelling is alternative in places. They seem to have taken more time on this page as it is among the easiest to read of all the notes they took. Curiously, they did not spell “Jerusalem” like it would be spelled typically in Classical Latin, but they opted to start with the Latin name for Acre in the correct case, which they do not always do with place names that take the genitive. Crucially, the ghost hand does not appear to be commenting on the work, merely labelling it, as Vesconte and Sanudo did not otherwise label the maps. This includes the portolans, which may have been opaque to someone who did not already know what they were or the geography that they

represent. This preface that the unknown author-audience made for themselves on an otherwise blank page indicates the depth of seriousness they were taking with their study, as well as their own removal from the milieu of Sanudo, who did not apparently think it necessary to label the maps. Accordingly, the second hand got many labels wrong: the map for Acre, spread across fols. 189v-190r (figure 11) is incorrectly labeled “Terra Aegypti” and “Terra Egipti.”

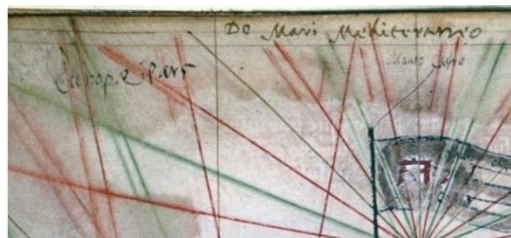


**Figure 11**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 189v-190r,  
map of Acre, erroneously labelled  
“Terra Aegypti” and “Terra Egipti.”

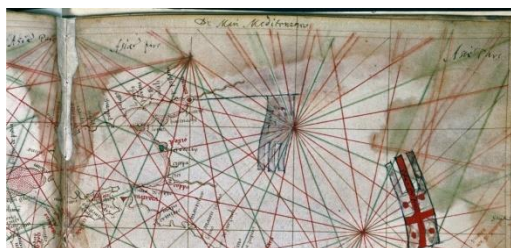
The second hand took several notes on the portolan charts as well, mostly labeling land and water masses. In the top left of folio 184v, depicting the Black Sea, the second hand wrote “Europe pars” (figure 12, fol. 184v, portolan of the Black Sea). The modern spelling could be a later Latin form of “Europa” using the nominative case rather than the genitive case for the phrase “part of Europe” (fol. 184v, portolan of the Black Sea). On the top of the map, the second hand wrote “do mari mediterraneo,” which may be Catalan for “concerning the Mediterranean Sea” or a form of “di mari mediterraneo,” which would mean the same thing in Italian (fol. 184v, portolan of the

Black Sea). It is unclear why the second hand wrote about the Mediterranean on a portolan of the Black Sea; possibly they were thinking through how the two bodies of water are connected, or speculating as to why the portolan was included in the volume. On the top of this portolan chart on both folios 184v and 185r, the second hand wrote variations of “asiae pars,” or “part of Asia,” appearing to substitute an apostrophe for the final “e” two out of three times (figure 13, fol. 184v, portolan of the Black Sea). Once more the phrase “di mari mediterraneo” appears, with an ambiguous character after the initial d that could be an o, e, or i, meaning the language could be Italian, Catalan, or a mix. They have also labelled all the flags on this portolan: although the majority of names are difficult to make out, the flag next to Constantinople, with the cross surrounded by four Greek letters beta associated with the Palaiologan dynasty, appears to have been labelled “Turchi” (figure 14). The second hand did not write as extensively on the portolans as they did in other parts of the manuscript, but their handwriting is unmistakable. It also appears that some words are in Italian or Catalan, though medieval vernacular proximity to Latin makes these inscriptions ambiguous. The second hand does not appear to be concerned with standardizing their spelling, which is common in post-classical Latin, but their meanings are clear enough. On this portolan chart, the second hand attempted to clarify which parts of the landmass around the Black Sea correspond to which continent. At the time, these shorelines may have been contested territory, and this poignant labelling places the second person within a timeline of shifting borders in Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Were they writing before, during, or after the Ottoman siege of Constantinople? Their

preoccupation with labelling landmasses on this portolan chart may indicate that the conflict was ongoing, and the labelling of the Constantinople heraldry as “Turchi” may mean that the conflict had ended, and that the area was under control of the Ottomans.



**Figure 12**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 184v, portolan chart of the Black Sea, detail of “Europ[a]e pars” and “[Do/De/Di] Mari Mediterraneo.”



**Figure 13**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 184v-185r, portolan chart of the Black Sea, detail of inscriptions “Asia[e] Pars” and “[Do/De/Di] Mari Mediterraneo.”

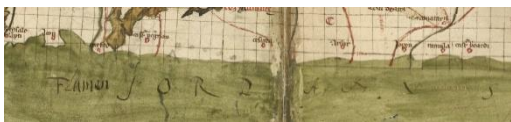


**Figure 14**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 184v-185r, portolan chart of the Black Sea, detail of the heraldry of Constantinople with the word “Turchi” written on it. Note that this image has been inverted from the original orientation of the portolan chart.

Inscriptions on the map of the Holy Land from the Additional 27376 shed the greatest light on the ghost hand’s identity. As mentioned previously, the second hand dutifully noted on the grid where each section of the text falls. They labeled this image “Terra Sancta” in multiple places and provided an unintelligible inscription beneath it on the right. Fascinatingly, the second hand also scrawled “Flumen Jordanus,” or “River Jordan,” in the middle of what the mapmakers clearly intended to be the Mediterranean Sea (figure 15). The word “Flumen” is in the middle of the ocean on the left folio, and the word “Jordanus” sprawls across both folios (fol. 188v-189r, map of the Holy



Land). Vesconte and his workers almost certainly knew that the Jordan River flows to the north of the Dead Sea. Although the Jordan River is not labeled on this map, the Dead Sea is, and there is clearly a river flowing to the north. Confusingly, the second hand also labeled one of the smaller bodies of water “Mare Rubeus” next to the words “Mare Mortuum” (figure 16). The original scribe placed a “D” in red above this body of water, and the corresponding textual inscription below the map indicates that this is, in fact, the Dead Sea (fol. 188v-189r, map of the Holy Land). The Red Sea does not appear on this map. The second hand’s labeling of the Dead Sea as “Red Sea Dead Sea” suggests that they were not sure and were thinking about it, that they wrote “Red Sea” and thought better of it, or possibly that they thought the two bodies of water were the same thing. As stated, the second hand also labelled Acre as being in Egypt. It seems unlikely that the author-audience who annotated these maps never made it to the Levant or Egypt, nor were they familiar with other informative texts and maps about what was essentially part of the Islamic world.



**Figure 15**  
MS Additional 27376, fol. 188v-189r,  
map of the Holy Land, detail of the  
Mediterranean labelled “Flumen Jordanus.”



**Figure 16**  
MS Additional 27376, fol.189r, map of  
the Holy Land, detail of the Dead Sea  
labelled “Mare Rubeus Mare Mortuum.”

All of these inscriptions raise the question of how these books were used and who made these notes. As stated, the books were commissioned by Sanudo and given out as gifts. The number of surviving copies indicates a proliferation of recipients but also might suggest that the books were not taken on ships and did not see much use outside of personal libraries. Many scholars consider Sanudo to be a propagandist (Laiou 1970, 375), and he disseminated the books to people he was actively entreating to do whatever was in their power to start a crusade. As Unger notes, “By the end of the thirteenth century the [portolan] had already become so normalized that it was common for cartographers to make presentation copies, versions designed for the libraries and offices of merchants, traders, and even politicians” (2010, 43). The portolans in the *Secreta* would have appealed to a learned audience interested in collecting and curating knowledge. I have argued that the portolans in the back of the book could have been functional objects, but they also represented an accumulation of knowledge to non-seafaring audiences, a category to which many recipients of the book probably belonged.

The annotations made by the later hand in the Additional 27376 indicate that Sanudo had an effect on at least one of his recipients. Although the individual behind the ghost hand clearly could read and write some Latin, their first language was probably Italian or Catalan, based on some of the inscriptions. Their use of Latin points to a life in the late medieval

period or early modern period, but there is no way to know for sure who wrote in it as provenance of the book is unclear before 1727 (The British Library, n.d.). If the author-audience is medieval, the first assumption for secondary inscriptions that appear to have a ruminating purpose in illuminated manuscripts is often monks and nuns. However, by this period, illuminated manuscripts were in common enough circulation that the hand could have instead belonged outside of monastic circles. They may have been a merchant given the expanding power and education of the merchant class in medieval Italy, the nature of the book, the blend of vernacular and Latin for place names, and the potential for monetary gain from crusading. Surviving contracts from Genoa from the fourteenth century indicate that it was common for young merchants to be taught Latin as it pertained to their employment (Black 2001, 56). As such, education level does not definitively identify the writer: a monk, nun, nobleman or noblewoman, or merchant could have possessed this level of education. The ghost hand probably belonged to a man given the subject matter, but it could have been the work of a woman who had an interest in crusading or pilgrimage. Lastly, given some of the naïve labeling on the maps, the second hand probably had not traveled to Jerusalem, Egypt, or anywhere near Constantinople at the time they made these inscriptions. It is intriguing to think that, possibly, this book belonged to someone as far away from Vesconte's Genoa workshop as Sanudo's noble cousins in Andros, Greece, or in the opposite direction as far away as Iberia where Catalan was common, but there is no way to know for sure. Of the medieval possibilities, it most likely belonged to a male member of the

Italian merchant class, who may have been a first, second, or even third owner.

Another intriguing possibility is that the ghost hand belonged to an early modern audience, perhaps an editor who wished to print the book, or maps, or both;<sup>x</sup> a sixteenth century reader could have inherited or purchased the volume as a curiosity and thought to disseminate it to the world as a medieval artifact.<sup>x</sup> The *Secreta* was indeed published once in 1611 by Bongars (Lock 2014, 138) so it is worthwhile to consider an early modern audience with an interest in publishing and printing. They would have had Latin consistent with the inscriptions as it continued to be a popular language in literary circles, and the maps, in particular, would have been of interest to a viewer rethinking the boundaries and limitations of a world recently placed in dialogue with two new continents. Although the scribe made numerous labelling errors, the labelling of "Turchi" on the Constantinople heraldry is particularly eye-catching and may reveal them to be contemporaneous with the Ottoman Empire. It is entirely possible that the ghost hand belonged to a person centuries younger than the volume itself to whom, although a crusade would have been unthinkable, the ideas may have been salient and interesting in a changing world where maps as tangible objects declare statements about the world. The maps have the power to both reveal the territory and its ownership as well as imagine the possibilities for a shifting terrain.

## Conclusion

The Additional 27376 represents multiple phases of Sanudo's ideas, and the maps must have been an important component to his lobbying efforts. The number of

surviving copies of the *Secreta*, the consistency among them, and the text itself indicate that Sanudo was fervent in his convictions and dedicated to his cause. He exhaustively detailed the logistics required to make his plans happen over approximately one hundred and fifty thousand words of refined Latin, separated into three parts. He commissioned at least twenty copies of a material-intensive and expensive book and appears to have dictated not just the words, but also the illustrations in very detailed and consistent terms. Lastly, he included extravagant maps made by a well-regarded atelier, adding to later copies of the book more of these visual aids to the genius and the righteousness of his plan. The similarities among the maps, I have argued, demonstrate Sanudo's propensity, as a discerning patron of knowledge, to wield significant influence over the works he commissioned, all in order to persuade his audience to take up arms and incite another crusade.

Yet, as C. J. Tyerman writes, "Sanudo died in 1343, a disappointed man. His will displays a sad defiance in his pleas for his work always to be available for consultation. The success of the Christian alliance of 1334 was a considerable achievement for which Sanudo must take some credit. But Sanudo's work had failed to achieve its purpose" (1982, 65). It is true that what Tyerman calls "the lost crusade" never came to fruition during Sanudo's life, despite all of his effort, but I would argue that the maps in the Additional 27376 display a glimpse of what his audience may have thought of his plans. The maps are the sum of interactions with various interlocutors, and they bear the traces thereof, having been made by Vesconte at Sanudo's behest, and then extensively annotated by an unknown

author-audience. The fact that the maps continued to have a traceable life and interactions with the world as an object long after Sanudo commissioned them is telling: the marks on the parchment made by the ghost hand are testimony to the words that the maps spoke to the reader. They indeed continue to speak to the reader, both in the flesh, and as digital objects that have assumed a new dimension of both authorship and readership. Indeed, the digital scans provide insight<sup>xi</sup> in that the inscriptions are much easier to read in the high-resolution scans, and they are widely available to anyone who wishes to peruse the British Library. Sanudo's work has perhaps reached further than he could have ever anticipated, and the maps as the objects of this inquiry have thus far lived interesting social lives.

This treatment of manuscripts in general as an object is not unusual, and the maps contained in the Additional 27376 manuscript amplify the impact that the volume may have had. The materiality of parchment lends itself to acts of devotion, and the dedication with which the ghost hand laboriously took notes and tried fundamentally to understand Sanudo's work can be read as a devotional act, regardless of who annotated it or what their ultimate purpose may have been. Someone, whoever they were, believed in Sanudo's cause enough to take studious notes, elevating the maps from luxury items delineating the world to well-loved and cherished objects that reflect their understanding of place. It will likely never be known to who the author-audience was, and the historical facts of Sanudo's never-to-be crusade are undeniable. However, the maps in the Additional 27376 should cause the scholar to reconsider the ardor with which Sanudo promoted his cause, and the amount of detail that went into

the planning as well as how his audience received it.

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<sup>i</sup> Although the exact date of completion is unknown, in his work, C. J. Tyerman estimates this year range from the start of Sanudo's first work, *Conditiones Terra Sancta*, to the date of the first finished manuscript copy. See Tyerman, “Marino Sanudo Torsello and the Lost Crusade: Lobbying in the Fourteenth Century (The Alexander Prize Essay),” 60-61.

<sup>ii</sup> The definition of an object's social life is inspired by Arjun Appadurai. Although I do not cite him directly in this paper, his methods are instrumental to my argument. See Arjun Appadurai 3-63.

<sup>iii</sup> The standardizations among surviving Secreta manuscripts, particularly the miniatures illustrating the text, and other archival sources indicate that Sanudo was highly involved in the creation of the manuscripts. Getting into this is largely outside the scope of this paper, but would it merit further research as the images are clearly deliberate.

<sup>iv</sup> For the dating on the Tanner 190, see “Bodleian Library MS. Tanner 190.” The Vatican Library identifies the Vat.Lat.2972 as a copy of the Secreta and dates it to 1301 to 1400 (see “Manuscript - Vat.lat.2972). Tony Campbell dates the Vaticani Latini 2972 to 1321, and the Palatini Latini 1362 to (possibly) 1320. Although the Palatini Latini 1362 has been divided into two works by the Vatican Library, David Jacoby writes that the entire manuscript is a copy of the Secreta with maps signed by Vesconte and argues that the date 1320 is speculative since the last character is rubbed away. However, he concludes that it must have been made at some

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point during that decade, which, for the purposes of this paper, still positions it as earlier than the Additional 27376 (Jacoby 3).

<sup>v</sup> All translations in Latin, Catalan, and Italian, unless otherwise noted, are the author's.

<sup>vi</sup> Pietro Vesconte is sometimes referred to as “Petrus Vesconte.” Additionally, the portolan charts are definitively attributed to Vesconte's workshop, but the other maps are more dubiously authored. It is understood that it was probably Vesconte's workshop that produced them, and the British Library and the Bodleian library both assert that all maps were made by Vesconte's workshop, but some scholars disagree (Edson 67-91).

<sup>vii</sup> Credit and thanks to Šima Krtalić for talking me through this point and her generous sharing of her thoughts on these *mappae mundi*.

<sup>viii</sup> Credit and thanks to Joaquim Alves Gaspar for discussing the practical use of portolans with me and pointing out this secondary use.

<sup>ix</sup> Credit and thanks for this suggestion goes to Lauren Beck, who generously reviewed this paper for comments and talked me through many of my ideas, including the possibility of an early modern publisher annotating the volume.

<sup>x</sup> The British Library identifies the hand as being 16<sup>th</sup> century cursive, though they have not published any definitive information about this manuscript other than this single line on the main page for the manuscript. See “Detailed record for Additional 27376.”

<sup>xi</sup> This point is inspired by Dan Terkla and Asa Simon Mittman, amongst others. Although the maps in the Additional 27376 have not been the

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recipients of spectral technology or any of the other scanning technologies that are widely making medieval maps more legible, the fact remains that having been scanned digitally makes them more accessible and, indeed, more legible (Terkla

forthcoming; Mittman 124-46). Both authors address the utility of digital scans, and furthermore, how the technology is impacting the scholarly understanding of these objects from the digital perspective.