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An Examination of the  
Iggeret Orhot Olam

by  
Abraham Farissol

Steven Michael Fink

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
New York, New York

Date: 1979

Referee: Professor Martin A. Cohen

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
New York School

Report on the Rabbinic Dissertation Submitted by Steven Michael Fink  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Ordination

AN EXAMINATION OF THE IGGERET ORHOT OLAM OF ABRAHAM FARISSOL

Mr. Fink has undertaken and accomplished the most thorough examination of this work of Farissol's to date. Other studies have dug deeper into Farissol's sources, but none has communicated the content or analyzed the major categories of Farissol's thought. This Mr. Fink has done with thoroughness of detail and great investigative skill in source analysis. He has paid special attention to three categories in Farissol's work: his geography, anthropology and information on Jewish settlements. In the process Mr. Fink has tracked down the identity of many obscure geographical names, which along with the better known names, are presented in an index beginning on page 81.

Mr. Fink's thesis represents an excellent introduction to Farissol's work and a worthy beginning to his own deeper scholarship on the subject. Besides its academic excellence, it has the merit of presentation in lucid English and interesting style.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the acceptance of this thesis.

Respectfully submitted,



Martin A. Cohen  
Rabbi

April 1979

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## Preface

Medieval Jewish travel guides have always fascinated me. Dr. Martin A. Cohen suggested that I could pursue and broaden this interest by reading the Iggeret Orhot Olam, the Letter of the Paths of the World, by Abraham Farissol. This was the first modern Hebrew geography and an exemplary work. It typifies the writing of Italian Jewry in the Renaissance. It combines a complete knowledge of secular arts and sciences with a thorough grounding in traditional texts. Farissol is a fine example of the Italian Jew in this period. He was educated in Judaic and secular subjects, was cultured and broad minded. He earned his living by copying scrolls and serving as a hazzan. He spent a great deal of time at the court of Ercole I of Ferrara with whom he developed a friendship. Farissol wrote the Orhot Olam in the last years of his life, leaving it as a lasting memorial to David Reubeni, whose visit to Italy helped stimulate its writing.

Any success I have had in my work must be credited to the help and guidance that Dr. Cohen gave me. He shared his time, concern, and talents with me. I have come to greatly admire and respect him. He has become my teacher and my rabbi. I thank Philip Miller, the librarian of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York for obtaining a copy of the Iggeret Orhot Olam

for me.

I thank my dear cousin, Jonnet Steinbaum for giving of her time and editing abilities. This thesis greatly profited from her suggestions. I also thank Ellen Weintraub for typing this manuscript.

I could not have written this thesis without the love and support of my wife Sally. She made it all possible.

Steven Michael Fink

Riverdale, New York, March, 1979

## Chapter One - Background

The Renaissance was the period of transition from the Middle Ages to modern times.<sup>1</sup> It was marked by the revival of ancient learning. Classical Greek and Latin texts were rediscovered.<sup>2</sup> Ptolemy's Geography, written 1,300 years earlier, was recovered and translated by Jacobus Angeles between 1406 and 1410.<sup>3</sup> The study of Hebrew was renewed. Popes and nobility collected Hebrew manuscripts and sponsored the work of skilled Hebrew copiests. The University of Bologna and the Sapienza in Rome established chairs in Hebrew. Courts obtained Jewish scholars to discuss and teach Judaism and to copy and translate Jewish texts.<sup>4</sup>

Man experienced a new freedom during the Renaissance. Before the Renaissance Christians had deified Christ. They had no sense of his individual ego because the Church was everything and man was nothing.<sup>5</sup> During the Renaissance, Christians attained a new personal regard and self-awareness.<sup>6</sup> The motto of the Renaissance was "the person is more important than all else."<sup>7</sup> Europe went through tremendous ferment during these years. Artistic activity, philosophical discussion, religious enthusiasm, and moral laxity all characterized this turbulent time.<sup>8</sup>

The prevailing trends of the Renaissance greatly influenced the Jews of Italy. The Jews reflected the color,

warmth, and interest of Renaissance Italy. The Jews<sup>9</sup>  
welcomed new spiritual and intellectual movements.  
They preserved the traditions of secular Jewish culture.<sup>10</sup>

The Italian Jews enjoyed great privileges. Jewish<sup>11</sup>  
intellectual life was thoroughly Italianized, and young  
Jews attended Italian universities where they primarily  
studied medicine. Jews were university lecturers, most  
often in the field of medicine. Jewish scholars were well  
known. They studied philosophy, literature and other  
disciplines. They often corresponded with Christian<sup>12</sup>  
scholars. Jewish physicians enjoyed a prominent repu-  
tation. They were employed by Italian courts, popes,  
and princes. They even ministered to the King of Muscovy<sup>13</sup>  
and the Sultan of Constantinople. The Jews served<sup>14</sup>  
Italian courts as diplomats, negotiators, engineers,  
mathematicians, inventors, and astronomers.<sup>15</sup> Many<sup>16</sup>  
Jews were artists. They taught music and dance, and  
served as instrumentalists, composers and singers. They<sup>17</sup>  
were actors and playwrights and excelled as goldsmiths<sup>18</sup>  
and metal workers. Jews commonly appeared at Italian  
courts to explain the rabbinic viewpoint and to elaborate<sup>19</sup>  
on Jewish belief. Prosperous Jewish bankers emulated  
their Christian counterparts. They subsidized artists  
and writers, maintained scholars, gathered noted libraries  
and provided their children with the best tutors. They<sup>20</sup>  
studied literature, philosophy, prosody, Bible, and Talmud.



Italy was the center of geographical literature in the sixteenth century. The Italian geographers studied the ancient geographical works and added their own insights to them. They inestimably influenced the contemporary European explorers.<sup>21</sup> Ptolemy's Geography provided new geographical information and spurred interest in new lands. Astronomers invented new astronomical instruments that allowed sailors to venture beyond sight of the shoreline. The basic stimulation to make new discoveries was commercial. Western Europeans wanted to find a sea route to India to end the Italian monopoly of the oriental spice trade.<sup>22</sup> Portugal led Europe in overseas exploration, partly because it was the closest to the Atlantic and had a long seacoast. Portuguese seamen were accustomed to sailing beyond their coastal waters in search of fish, gold, and new lands. The Portuguese discovered the Madeira Islands in 1345, the Azores in the same year,<sup>23</sup> and the Canary Islands in 1351. King Henry IV was called "the Navigator" because he directed Portugal's energies towards discovery.

The discovery of the sea route to India proceeded in five stages. In the first stage the Portuguese conquered Ceuta, on the Moroccan coast in 1415. That discovery encouraged them to extend their voyages southward along the West African coast. They rounded Cape Bojador in 1434. During the second stage, they discovered Cape Verdi

in 1445 and the Gulf of Guinea in 1461. During the third stage they explored the remainder of the coast of Guinea and reached Cape Catherine south of the Equator in 1475. In the fourth stage, Diego Cam discovered the Congo River and explored fourteen hundred fifty miles of coastline. He erected a pillar at Cape Cross in 1482. Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 and explored twelve hundred sixty miles of African coastline. Portuguese exploration reached its peak in the fifth stage when Vasco de Gama circumnavigated Africa with a fleet of four ships in 1498. The fleet rounded the Cape of Good Hope, sailed north along Africa's eastern coast until it reached Malindi and then sailed eastward to Calicut.<sup>24</sup> The Portuguese reached Ceylon in 1507 and seized Goa in 1510. They conquered Malacca in the same year. Their ships sailed on to Canton, China, in 1516. The Portuguese<sup>25</sup> began trading with Japan in 1524.

The Portuguese broke the dominance of the Indian trade by Arab Moslems. They built a fortress at Sokotra at the entrance to the Red Sea in 1506 and captured the Persian Gulf island of Hormuz in 1507, blocking the Red Sea and cutting the Arabs' trade route to India. This resulted in the decline of the Venetian spice trade because the Arabs had sold Indian spices to the Venetians. The Italian spice monopoly was broken, and the Portuguese, followed by other Western European countries, exploited

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the opportunities to bring spices to Europe.

America was discovered by accident, a result of the search for a sea route to India.<sup>27</sup> Christopher Columbus used prophecy in his attempt to find the Indian sea route. He read from Isaiah 11:10-12 and Second Ezra 3:17-19 and ignored astronomy. He once said:

In the carrying out of this enterprise of the Indies neither reason nor maps were any use to me: fully accomplished were the words of Isaiah.

Columbus read Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly's Image of the World. Marco Polo's account of his eastern travels, Ptolemy's Geography, and the work of Paolo Toscanelli, a Florentine cosmographer who first mentioned the possibility of reaching the East by sailing west. Columbus discovered America accidentally when he miscalculated the distance<sup>29</sup> between India and Spain and thought America was India.

Pedro Alvares Cabral, the commander of Portugal's second expedition to India, discovered Brazil accidentally in March, 1500. He sailed too far to the southwest in an attempt to avoid the becalmed waters of the Gulf of Guinea, and he reached Brazil unintentionally. He left Brazil shortly afterwards and arrived in Calicut on<sup>29</sup> September 13, 1500.

Jews made major contributions to the study of geography. Abraham Cresques, a Majorcan Jew, wrote the Catalan Atlas, in 1375. This series of maps was the most<sup>30</sup> complete geographical source during the Middle Ages.

His son, Jehuda Cresques, known as Jacome of Majorca,  
was Henry the Navigator's cartographer.<sup>31</sup> A Portuguese  
Jew, Joseph Vizinho, served King John II as a mathematician.  
He invented a new method to calculate latitude by  
measuring the height of the midday sun. He prepared  
declination tables that facilitated the work of mariners.<sup>32</sup>  
Another Portuguese Jewish mathematician, Abraham Zacuto,  
served King John II by preparing tables, calculations,  
and astronomical instruments for Vasco de Gama's journey  
to India.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish scholars first learned modern geographical  
and astronomical information from the Arabs who lived  
around them. The Arabs deduced that the earth is a sphere  
from observing star heights at different latitudes.  
Hasan ben Mar Hasan Ha-Dayyan, a 10th century Cordavan  
rabbi, was the first Jew to consider the earth as a  
sphere. Sherira ben Hanina Gaon and his son, Hai Gaon,  
who lived in 10th century Baghdad, rejected the idea that  
the heavens were similar to a cap over the flat earth.  
Jewish scholars who lived in Moslem countries during the  
11th century accepted the fact that the earth was spherical.  
Abraham ben Hiyya wrote Sefer Zurat Haaretz, the first  
modern Hebrew geography, late in the 11th century. His  
main source was Ptolemy. Ben Hiyya asserted that the  
earth was round and was divided into seven climatic zones.  
He described the lower half of the earth as composed

entirely of water. Its upper half consisted almost entirely of land except for a few small seas. Human habitation was limited to the seven climatic zones. The area north of sixty six degrees latitude was uninhabited because of the extreme cold. The area south of the Equator was<sup>34</sup> also uninhabited because of the intense heat.

The Este family ruled the Italian city of Ferrara. Ferrara was Europe's first modern city. Large houses were built there, the official classes were concentrated, and trade was actively promoted. The city's financial system was perfectly administered. Soldiers received their pay and university professors received their salaries. The rulers hoped that Ferrara's prosperity would equal the regular<sup>35</sup> increases in taxation.

Ferrara's court was celebrated as a centre of artistic patronage. The court supported such artists as Francesco<sup>36</sup> Cossa, Boiardo, Ariosto, and other leading painters. It also supported scholars and writers. Ercole I rewarded<sup>37</sup> his favorites by giving them palaces.

Ercole I was fascinated with geography and the discovery of new lands. He shared this interest with Abraham Farissol. Based on their common interests, they developed a long-lasting friendship.

Abraham Farissol was born in Avignon, Provence, in 1451. He moved to Mantua in 1468 when he was seventeen years old. Five years later he moved to Ferrara where he remained for

eight years, until 1481. He then moved to Sermide, a town near Mantua, where he lived for a year. He returned to Ferrara in 1482 and remained until 1484 when he moved to Bologna for three years. He returned to Ferrara in 1487 and stayed there, except for trips to Florence and Rome, until he died in 1526.<sup>38</sup>

Farissol was a skilled copiest of Hebrew manuscripts and was commissioned by many patrons. He had a beautiful voice and was employed as a hazzan by a local Ferraran congregation.<sup>39</sup> He was a man of broad culture. Duke Ercole I enjoyed Farissol's conversation and his presence at court. He urged Farissol to conduct a disputation with a group of Dominican Friars before the Ducal court for their enjoyment.<sup>40</sup> He also suggested that Farissol record the debates to give his opponents the opportunity to reply. The result was Farissol's polemical work, Magen Avraham, which he wrote in Hebrew with an abstract in Italian.<sup>41</sup> The Magen Avraham defends Judaism and attacks Christianity and Islam. It contains two separate chapters and few original arguments.<sup>42</sup>

Farissol wrote a number of other books. Pirhei Shoshanim is a short Torah commentary which exists only in manuscript. His commentary on Ecclesiastes also exists only in manuscript.<sup>43</sup> His commentary on Job was printed in Venice in the Bomberg Bible in 1517.<sup>44</sup> It contains many geographical descriptions and Hebrew literature's

first reference to the New World.<sup>45</sup> The Iggeret Orhot Olam, Letter of the Paths of the World, was Farissol's last and most important book. David Reuveni's appearance in Italy in 1524 and his reading of Francanda Montalboddo's popular travel text, Paesi Novamenti Retrovati, stimulated<sup>46</sup> Farissol to write about the new discoveries. He wrote<sup>47</sup> the Iggeret Orhot Olam in Ferrara in 1525. It was printed in Ferrara in 1525 and in Venice in 1586. Thomas Hyde translated the Iggeret Orhot Olam into Latin and had it printed in parallel columns of Latin and Hebrew in<sup>48</sup> England in 1691. The Iggeret Orhot Olam was printed in many subsequent editions. The edition used by this writer was published in Prague in 1793.

Farissol relied on many sources in writing the Iggeret Orhot Olam. His primary text was Montalboddo's Paesi Novamenti Retrovati, which Farissol calls the<sup>49</sup> Sefer Olam Hadash. He also drew on Josephus' Wars of<sup>50</sup> the Jews. He read the works of Bergomas and Amerigo and used the Bible as a major geographical source. He was greatly influenced by Ptolemy's Geography. He read a new edition that contained an appendix of maps of the world. The first part of the Iggeret Orhot Olam is based on<sup>51</sup> Ptolemy's Geography. He also read the Latin translations of Arab geographical sources. Farissol did not use Jewish geographical sources because many of them were fantastic imaginary tales. He did use Christian sources because they provided objective eyewitness accounts and utilized the

latest methods in cartography and mathematics. They gave reliable evidence for the existence of lost Jewish  
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communities.

The Iggeret Orhot Olam has a two-part structure. The first part includes twelve chapters and gives a general description of the earth. He divides the earth into climatic zones, continents, and individual countries. He describes the inhabited parts of the earth. He explains that there are three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa. He delineates their boundaries and describes their inhabited regions. He provides detailed descriptions of individual countries and pays special attention to the Mediterranean area. In the second part he described Vasco de Gama's journey along the west coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope to India. He describes the inhabitants of the new lands the Portuguese discovered. He discusses David Reubeni's trip to Italy, the location of the Garden of Eden and the source of the Garden of Eden's four  
53  
rivers. He states the purpose of the book in the introduction: to provide useful reading and to fill the reader's leisure time while instructing them in God's  
54  
wonders.

The Iggeret Orhot Olam was the primary Hebrew geography textbook that Jews studied until the nineteenth century  
55  
when it was supplanted by modern works.



## Chapter Two - Chapter Summaries

### Chapter One

The earth is a land specked sphere mostly covered with water. It hangs on nothing. Three foundations surround the earth, and planets encircle the foundations.

The northern half of the earth is divided into four quarters which are further divided into regions, sections, and degrees. The equator is located at the end of the southeastern section. Its axis traverses the island of Trofabana (Ceylon) and crosses the Indian Ocean. Ptolemy called this region Terra Incognita because it was unknown to him. The extreme northern part of the earth beyond the island of Halondi is sparsely settled, desolate, and very cold. The southern section of the northern quadrant is well populated.

### Chapter Two

The population is concentrated in the northern half of the earth. The southern half contains few people because of its extreme heat.

Asia is populated by Shem's descendants, Africa by Ham's descendants, and Europe by Yaphet's descendants. Joseph ben Gurion HaCohen and the authors of Supplementum

Chronicorum accept this distribution of population as correct.

The earth has three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Europe's southern boundary includes the following countries: Spain, particularly Gibraltar, Italy, Greece, the Hellespont, and Russia where Europe ends at the River Tanais (Don River). Europe includes the countries of Spain, France, Germany, Dacia, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Macedonia, Dalmatia, Thrace, Curvakia, and Italy. Many islands are included within Europe's boundaries. They are England, Scotland, Ireland, Majorca, Minorca, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Candia (Crete).

Africa's western border is Gibraltar. Its eastern borders are the Red Sea and the Nile River.

Asia's western border is the Nile River. Its eastern border is China.

### Chapter Three

Ptolemy divided the northern half of the earth into seven divisions. Most geographers agree with Ptolemy's division. The equator divides the earth into north and south, traversing the island of Trofabana and the Indian Ocean.

The first region's eastern border is the Nile River, and its western border is the Fortunati Islands (Canary Islands). The second region's eastern border is Egypt, and

its western border is the sea to the north of the Fortunati Islands.

The third region's eastern border is Arabia, and its western border is Alexandria. Israel is part of this region. The fourth region's eastern borders are the Mediterranean Sea, Rhodes, and Media. Its western borders are Spain and Catalonia. The fifth region's eastern borders are Media, the Caspian Sea, and Greece. Its western borders are Italy and Spain. The sixth region's eastern borders are Media, the Caspian Sea, and Constantinople. Its western borders are Germany and Flanders. The seventh zone's eastern border is Germany, and its western border is Ireland.

#### Chapter Four

Geography's major benefit is that one can easily locate a place by simply knowing its latitude and longitude. One who inquires into the Mappa Mundi can find any region or territory in the world by using this method.

Ptolemy divided the world into ninety degrees from east to west and sixty-five degrees from north to south. He called these degrees zones, leagues or parallels.

Judea lies between the thirty-third and thirty-fourth degree of latitude and between the fourth and fifth belt of longitude. Trofabana lies at the sixty-fifth degree of longitude. Every kingdom can be easily located in this manner.

## Chapter Five

The eastern end of the earth's land mass is India Istra. Its western end is Gibraltar. Gibraltar's northern half is named Grenada; its southern half is named Mabritania Cesari. Geographers say that the earth is seven to eight thousand miles wide. It is possible to traverse the earth's land mass by traveling entirely over land and avoiding all seas.

Spanish sailors sailed the entire world, from east to west and north to south. They discovered many new lands which the Mappa Mundi lists. Ptolemy was ignorant of the existence of these lands. His geographical knowledge ended at Sinarum Regio. He did not know of Sinum Magnum's existence.

The Mediterranean Sea is also called the Middle Sea. Its western border is Gibraltar, and its eastern border is Beirut. There are many islands in the Middle Sea. It is three thousand miles wide and one thousand miles long. Genoa is the mid-point of the Mediterranean Sea.

## Chapter Six

The Mediterranean's southern shore borders on Cilicia and Syria to the east. The rabbis called Cilicia Aram. The western border lies on Mabritania Cesari, which is opposite Gibraltar. The Mediterranean's southern shore is

fifteen hundred miles long. The land along its shoreline is cultivated. One can travel from one end of this shoreline to the other without finding a sea to interrupt his journey. However, one must cross many rivers which flow from the mountains of Africa and Barbary to the Mediterranean.

### Chapter Seven

Europe's coastal islands are England, Scotland, and Ireland. They are located in the Atlantic Ocean west of France. Spain and Portugal form the western boundaries of the European land mass.

Europe consists of a number of different regions: Gaul, which extends from the Atlantic Ocean to Cologne in Germany, Germany itself, Hungary, which extends to the Danube River, Greece, Thrace, and Constantinople.

The countries that lie along the Mediterranean's northern shore are, from west to east, Gibraltar, Andalusia, Spain, France, Italy, Dalmatia, Macedonia, Albania, Greece and Constantinople.

Italy is one thousand miles long and one hundred and twenty miles wide. Many islands lie off its coast.

Europe's northeastern end is the Hellespont which lies in the Black Sea. The land of Tartary is located north of the Black Sea. The cold is so intense there it makes satyrs dance!

## Chapter Eight

Portuguese sailors circumnavigated Africa and discovered many new kingdoms. They called Africa's southern region lower Africa and its northern region Africa Superior. The boundaries of Africa Superior are the seacoast and the mountains.

The Nile River originates at the Mountains of the Moon. It flows through Miror, Damietta, and Alexandria on its way to the Mediterranean.

The Red Sea begins east of Egypt. It is a small part of the Barbary Sea and the Indian Ocean.

There are many large cities in the Middle East some of which are Jaffa, Sur, Sidon, Beirut, and Damascus. Arabia Felix consists of the regions of Moab, Edom, and Palestine.

The waters of the Euphrates descend from the Sarmatsian Mountains in Mesopotamia and flow to the Persian Sea. The region of Sinum is comprised of Persia and Media. The people known as the Krovani dwell in the desert of this region. They trade spices which they obtain from lands to the east near the Indian Ocean such as Calicut and Lamika. The land of Eden, the River Sambatyon, and many recent discoveries are found in this region. Many Jews inhabit this area.

## Chapter Nine

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the lands to the far east of Damascus. Persia's coastal regions include many kingdoms, large cities, and long deserts that reach the ends of the earth. Ptolemy knew of this region and its geography. The kingdoms in this region border on Persia and India. They are Carmania, which lies in the Persian Sea region, Aria, Drangiana, and Arachosia, which is near the Indus Rivers. Deserts, mountains, and forests lie between these kingdoms. Sirka is a wonderful kingdom that lies to the east of Persia. It consists of deserts, mountains, forests, spices, animals, and strange birds. Jews are locked in this kingdom and denied exit.

Trofabana is an island that lies south of the equator in the Indian Ocean. Its inhabitants are black. They wear white clothes covering half their bodies. They are pagans who worship idols and planets.

Ptolemy thought Sinum Magnum was the world's eastern end.

Beyond Armenia, to the northeast, are the regions of Scotania, Tanem, Irkania, Carmania, and Oshiana, the kingdom of the Sufis with its capital of Shushan. There is a large sea in this area that is surrounded by the desert and has no connection to other seas. Its waters are bitter, therefore it is called the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea includes many islands. It lies near the source of the Euphrates

in the mountains of Media.

### Chapter Ten

The Holy Torah proclaimed that Israel's borders are the Nile River on the west and the Euphrates River on the east. Israel's northern neighbors are Babylonia, Media, Aram, Licia, and Cilicia. Israel's southern neighbors are the Arab kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Amalek, Sihon, Og, and Ammon. Joseph ben Gurion HaCohen claims that these kingdoms are to the southeast of Israel. Israel does not possess all of this land, for it is not yet deserving.

Many Jews reside in the desert of Habur where they live in tents and wood houses under the rule of their own princes. It is possible to cross this desert and reach the road to Lamika where one finds the Indian Ocean. Many Jews proceeded down this route to the sea. The Jews shall eventually leave Habur and return to Israel in their swift boats.

### Chapter Eleven

The sea route from Venice to Constantinople traverses the coastline of Dalmatia, which is called Albania, Macedonia, Salonika, and Gallipoli. Sailors along this route pass the islands of Corfu, Crete, and Rhodes.

The Black Sea, also called the Sea of Constantinople, is



north of Adrianople and Constantinople. The Russian border and the River Tanais, which forms the boundary between Europe and Asia, are also in this region. This area's inhabitants are terrifying and frightening.

Ships sailing from Venice to Israel pass the island of Corfu, the Cretian city of Candia, and Rhodes before they reach Famagusta, the capital of Cyprus. From there they follow the coast of Asia Minor traversing the coastline of Cilicia, Syria, Beirut, and Jaffa before sailing on to Alexandria. Merchants favor this route over all others.

## Chapter Twelve

The overland journey from Venice to Flanders takes four days according to the coachmen and couriers who make it. The sea route takes a minimum of eighteen months and a maximum of two years. It is difficult to measure the length of the sea route because wind changes cause ships to go astray, but the minimum length is three thousand miles and the maximum length is four thousand miles. Hazards such as wind variations and pirates cause changes in the sea route.

A ship sailing to Flanders leaves Venice and sails eastward along the Dalmatian and Albanian coasts. It then enters the Adriatic Sea where the ship turns west and then south to sail around Italy. The ship enters the Mediterranean

Sea near Calabria. It sails westward and negotiates the Straits of Messina. The ship then turns north and sails along the Italian coast. It passes the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. The ship then sails parallel to the French coast, passing Marseilles, Aragon, and Perpignan before entering Spanish territory at Barcelona. The ship then wends its way to Majorca, Minorca, and Andalusia and navigates the Strait of Gibraltar. It journeys northward passing Portugal and the Basque Kingdom along the way and finally reaching the narrow strait between England and Flanders. In some places the strait is only ten miles wide. The ship eventually arrives in Flanders, a territory ruled by the French king. This is the only possible sea route between Venice and Flanders, according to the guides written by sailors.

### Chapter Thirteen

The earth's population expanded and spread through the earth's seven regions to the areas south of the Equator and the Indian Ocean islands of Zanzibar and Madagascar. The population even spread to the great land which lies to the southwest in the Atlantic Ocean.

Ptolemy lacked knowledge of the new lands the Portuguese have recently discovered in Africa. Ships owned by the kings of Spain and Portugal bring African trade goods back to their countries. The ships sail through the Strait of Gibraltar and pass the Fortunati Islands before sailing

along the West African coast passing Cape Cantin, Cape Blanco, and Cape Verde. The ships reach the Cape of Good Hope at which point they turn southeast. A ship returns from Africa once every three years.

The Portuguese rediscovered the Biblical land of Ophir. They found a great deal of gold and built a fortress there. The author of Olam Hadash supports this opinion.

The Bible refers to these new discoveries. It mentions Ophir, which borders on the Canary Islands to the north and the land of Cannibali to the south. King Solomon sent ships to Ophir to search for gold. His ships sailed from their port at Etzion Geber south through the Red Sea and entered the Indian Ocean. At this point, the ships had two choices. If they turned right they would encircle Africa and reach Ophir. If they turned left, they would reach India. Solomon's ships took the former course and reached Ophir, where they found the gold that made Solomon rich. The texts that prove the lands of Cush and Ophir were known in Biblical times are II Kings 19:9, "King Tirhaka of Cush came to fight him," and I Kings 22:49, "King Jehosophat constructed Tarshish ships to sail to Ophir for gold. But he did not sail because his ships were wrecked at Etzion Geber."

The Bible mentions the newly discovered land of Telsar, which is located south of Upper India. The proof texts for this are II Kings 19:12 and Isaiah 37:12 that say "...in Telsar...."

## Chapter Fourteen

This chapter revolves around the journey of David ben Shlomo, General of the Army of Israel, better known as David Reubeni. Reubeni belonged to a group of two Jewish tribes who lived in the desert of Habur. The remainder of the ten Jewish tribes lived in the region of the Red Sea between Guda and Lamika under the rule of their own kings. These Jews traded spices, pepper, and medicine. Their population equaled the number of grains of sand on the seashore.

A large and powerful group of Moslems lived between the two Jewish tribes and kept them apart. They attacked them and prevented their unification.

David Reubeni was a short, thin, and stouthearted individual. He prayed often and often fasted for six days at a time. The purpose of his journey was to obtain stone-throwing catapults, fire-throwing engines and the soldiers to operate both. He wanted to make an alliance with the Pope and Christian kings so that they would join the Jews to fight the Moslems in a campaign to conquer Israel.

Reubeni traveled from Habur to Israel where he sent a letter in Hebrew to the Doge of Venice identifying himself and announcing his intention to continue to Venice. Farissol's interest was aroused when he heard a report in 1523 from the Venetian Doge regarding the Reubeni letter. Reubeni arrived in Venice in 1524. He left Venice and

traveled to Rome where he revealed the nature of his journey and waited for a letter from the King of Portugal. The Pope received the King's letter saying that Portuguese sailors had discovered a Jewish Kingdom while exploring the region of India. The letter attested to the truth of Reubeni's story. Reubeni met with Pope Clement VII and reached an agreement with him in the month of Marcheshvan, 1525. The Pope agreed to give Reubeni weapons and soldiers in return for permission to govern parts of Israel and to gather spices and medicines. The Pope promised Reubeni that a ship full of weapons and soldiers would leave Portugal, circumnavigate Africa, and reach Habur.

Reubeni's journey inspired Farissol to end this chapter with a prayer. "May he give us grace and mercy, and strengthen the hearts of our kings and princes to do good for all Israel until the coming of our Redeemer, Amen."

### Chapter Fifteen

Ptolemy called Ethiopa Terra Incognita because he lacked geographical knowledge of it. The Portuguese explored Africa and discovered Cape Blanco, Cape Nun, Cape Verde, and the Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese made these journeys because they wanted to reach the East and because they hated the Moslems. They found black people in Africa called Azanigo who wore no clothing.

The Portuguese ships circumnavigated Africa by sailing west to east. They left their ports in Portugal and Gibraltar and sailed south with the land to their left and the sea to their right. They sailed in this direction for fifteen hundred miles and passed many islands that had diverse types of wildlife such as large doves, rabbits, snakes, and unusual animals. The ships then reached Cape Verde and turned east for a distance of one thousand miles. The sailors called places along their route by such names as Castile di Lamina, Porto di Lago, and Capo di Lagela. The ships then turned south for a distance of sixteen hundred miles during which they passed the Kingdom of Aziniba and Capo di Largal. The ships finally arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, the southernmost point of land, two thousand miles south of the Equator, which the Portuguese called Capo DiBona Sferantza. From here the ships turned north and followed the land for four thousand miles where they reached the entrance to the Red Sea. At this point the sailors could travel north to Mount Sinai and Egypt or they could enter the land at Arabia Felix, and travel to Habur where many Jews lived in a Jewish kingdom. The sailors then could journey from Habur to Lamika where they could then sail for three or four days across the Indian Ocean to Calicut. Calicut was the center of the spice trade. Many islands lay off the shore of Calicut some of them inhabited by Jews.

The Mappa Mundi details all of these new discoveries. Geographers from Germany, Venice, and Florence wrote this book.

### Chapter Sixteen

The Portuguese ships often sailed alone on their dangerous journeys of exploration. They were often blown off course, and, as a result, many sailors died. The sailors set out to Africa by setting off on a southwesterly course. The sailors discovered an uninhabited island far from land during one of their journeys. They named this island Partem Sanctam, the inner sanctuary.

The King of Portugal ordered the island's colonization. Young men and women brought their cattle and sheep and settled the island. This occurred at the same time that Portugal expelled the Marranos. Many Marranos fled to the island searching for a refuge.

The circumference of Partem Sanctam is twenty-five miles. From its mountains, many small rivers flow to the sea. Wild boars, rabbits, and pigeons are abundant. Fish are easily caught off the coast and are of great value. The island produces wax, honey, and a sap called Dragon's blood. The sap drips from a certain type of tree. It is collected, boiled, and after the froth is removed, packed in kegs and traded. Another type of tree

yields fruit similar to cherries but only during time of drought.

### Chapter Seventeen

The Portuguese ships sailed from Partem Sanctam on a southeasterly course. They journeyed for only forty miles when they discovered another island that they called Madeira. The new island was covered with trees and had a circumference of forty-five miles.

The sailors agreed that if the island was to be settled the trees would have to be removed. The sailors set fire to the trees. The blaze was so intense that the sailors were forced to flee the island and jump into the sea, where they stayed in water up to their necks for two days.

The King of Portugal ordered the island's colonization. Settlers came with their cattle, fruit trees, and plants. The colonists introduced wheat, barley, fruit, vegetables, honeycombs, and grapevines from Cyprus and Candia that ripen about the time of Pesach. The island furnishes Lisbon with chicory, wheat, cattle, animals, birds, and timber. It is also a valuable fishing port.

### Chapter Eighteen

The Portuguese sailors departed from Madeira and sailed



southwest for two hundred ten miles where they discovered the Canary Islands, a group of seven small islands, each parallel to the next and about forty miles apart. Christians inhabited four of the islands while pagans lived on the three others. The Portuguese conquered the islands, but they were not able to drive out the eight thousand pagans who inhabited one of the larger islands.

These pagans are skilled in the arts of dyeing and painting. They eat meat and make bread from barley. They drink great quantities of goats' milk. Their food supply lacks wheat and wine. They wear no clothes. Their king deflowers all the virgins. The women grease their skin with goats' milk and use the juice of grass to toughen their skin.

The sailors left the Canary Islands and traveled on a southwesterly course for two hundred ninety miles when they discovered three more islands (The Cape Verde Islands). They named one of the islands "Gantsin" after a local fish-eating waterfowl.

Christopher Columbus discovered the Azore Islands after sailing northwest of the Canary Islands for fifteen days. He captured a native woman whom he treated well, and they returned to her own island where he found large amounts of gold. A small number of Christians remained on the island to search for more gold, but the natives killed them.

Columbus sailed for another thirty days during which he discovered other islands. Cannibals inhabit one of these islands. They capture and castrate their male victims whom they then tie up to fatten before killing. They salt the corpses and then eat them. These cannibals sacrifice their first born children and eat them at feasts.

Amazons inhabit another entire island. Once a year they make war and then copulate with their male captives. They send away their male offspring but keep the females whom they train for war. They engage in the unusual custom of cutting off their left breasts to grasp their bows more closely to their hearts.

The Christians found gold on these islands, but they had no access to it. The water off the islands was so shallow their ships ran aground when they approached the islands. The cannibals then ran out and killed the sailors. The islanders considered gold to be valueless and received trinkets in exchange for it.

The heat on these islands was so intense it made the sailors ill. They had no remedy for it.

### Chapter Nineteen

A huge desert divides Africa in half, separating northern and southern Africa. North Africa borders on the Mediterranean Sea. South Africa borders on the Atlantic Ocean.

Many promontories jut into the sea along the West African coast. These are Cape Lugdor, Cape Cantin, Cape Blanco, and Cape Verde. Cape Cantin is the most important trading post in West Africa. The Portuguese trade salt, which remedies the salt deficiency of the natives there. In return, the natives barter gold, silver, and precious stones. The traders travel great distances inland in the hot and dry climate to increase their trade.

The inhabitants of this area wear no clothes because of the intense heat. Their villages are not European in appearance; they lack stone walls, buildings, houses, doors and locks. The young women tie their breasts so tightly with rope that they make fissures, creating four breasts instead of the usual two. They consider this to be beautiful.

## Chapter Twenty

The Senegal River flows into the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Verde, three hundred eighty miles south of Cape Blanco. Every six hours the tides enter the very wide mouth of the river. The Senegal River separates the region of Hazinagi Brittany from the Kingdom of Senegal, which has a large land area and a large population. The Senegal's source is the Nile River, which originates in the Mountains of the Moon. These mountains separate Upper and Lower Africa. Upper Africa borders on the Mediterranean Sea

and Lower Africa borders on the Atlantic Ocean. The Senegal River makes the land through which it flows lush and fertile. It brings water to all kinds of animals. The seashore in this region is thick with foliage for nine hundred miles.

### Chapter Twenty-One

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the customs of the African natives who live south of Cape Verde and north of Senegal in the regions of Cape Verde, Gambia, Senegal, and Bandamal. Gambia is the Biblical land of Ophir, the place to which Solomon sent seventy-five ships for gold. Bandamal is a wonderful place near the Senegal River where dates are the staple food. It is seldom cold in this region, and when it is, the weather resembles Italy in April. There is abundant wildlife in this region. Large serpents called crocodiles resemble beams of wood and lie alongside pools of water. These creatures are capable of eating a child or a sheep in one bite. Many elephants of all shades of color roam through this area. Giraffes are abundant. (The author mentions that he saw one in the city of Florence in 1485.) There are few domestic cattle.

This region has many kings one of whom they make the overall ruler. The kings exact tribute of horses, animals, and birds from the populace. The kings do not live in

European style palaces because they do not have building materials of stone, plaster and marble. The supreme king constantly travels throughout his realm. He consequently does not have one fixed palace. He does have thirty to forty wives dispersed among many villages. His subjects supply him with food, clothes, and women, but they do not give their king any property whatsoever. He lacks a royal title. His subjects refer to him as a poor man and beggar. When he dies his body is burnt on a funeral bier. The dead king's wives follow him onto the pile of blazing wood to the accompaniment of drum beats and dancing.

The men in the region are sexually promiscuous constantly engaging in sexual activity in order to improve their health and enlarge their penises. They grease their penises with herbs and thorns to increase their thickness. The women in this region, like other Eastern women, do not desire small-boned and small-headed men.

This area must import food from wetter regions. It does, however, possess good fruit from which date wine is made. Wheat and barley grow well in this region. The natives drink cows' milk as if it were water.

These natives are expert sailors. They imitate Europeans in making tools and utensils. They are talkative, boisterous people who love to dance in the moonlight to drums and stringed instruments. They are always clean because they bathe four or five times a day.

## Chapter Twenty-Two

The Red Cape is south of the Kingdom of Bandamal. Sailors named this promontary "Red Cape" because from a distance the land appears to be red. There are many rivers in this region, some as wide as twenty miles. Their source is the Mountains of the Moon, and they flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The natives called these rivers the Kasamasa. The explorers named them after Christian holy days like the Santa Anna and Santa Yacobi. The explorers traveled up these rivers and discovered native settlements. By using a translator the explorers taught the natives how to work the land and how to sow wheat and barley.

The natives wear few clothes, and they cover their genitals only slightly. They live in buildings and use tools similar to those of the Christians.

The natives constantly copulate even in public. The women prefer men with large penises so the men enlarge their penises by stretching and greasing them. The women paint their bodies with many colors. They lacerate their bodies with bone joints. They also tatoo the images of birds and animals onto their skin. They do this for either cosmetic or idolatrous reasons.

The Mountains of the Moon separate Upper and Lower Africa. Upper Africa borders on the Mediterranean Sea and Lower Africa borders on the Atlantic Ocean. The Torah calls Africa's central region by the names of Cushim,

Ludim, and Putim.

### Chapter Twenty-Three

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the African coast from the Red Cape on the west to the Red Sea on the east. The coastal land is green, lush, and fertile. Many rivers flow through the region to the sea. Some of them are forty miles wide. They are called the Basigavi, Finsanti, and Verda Rivers. Many promontories jut out into the sea. Red Cape is the most northernly of them. Cape Verga is south of the Basivagi Rvier. Cape Sagram is one hundred forty miles south of Cape Verga. Cape Salorum is south of Cape Sagram and is called the Holy Cape. It is the location of a large structure built by King Don Henrique of Portugal. Cape Alagra is called the Happy Cape. Inland from this cape, in a sandy region, is a high mountain called Aryeh Leong. A large city named Alla Marisca lies at the northern border of Portuguese territory on Africa's east coast in the region of Malindi. This is the dividing line between Lower and Upper Africa. The Red Sea begins north of this region.

The inhabitants of this region are idolators who tatto their faces and wear tree bark as clothes. Bows, arrows, and slingshots are their weapons. They make their bread from rice and millet. The wealthy among them wear gold rings in their ears, noses, and lips, but they remove the

rings at mealtimes.

Sea monsters live in the ocean near the coast. They are so powerful that they can easily overturn boats. They are so terrifying they frighten voyagers. Scholars claim that these monsters are known to have eaten a horse and its rider. Farissol disputes this assertion, saying that the monsters' gullets are too small to swallow anything larger than what a small fish can swallow. He compares the sea monsters to Leviathan, the great fish that swallowed Jonah. This identification is incorrect, says Farissol, for Leviathan eats men and these sea monsters are unable to. This chapter ends with the statement that God created the sea monsters.

#### Chapter Twenty-Four

The Calamity Islands off the East African coast act as a magnet and pull ships toward them. The East African coastline is composed of loosely packed sand that the wind occasionally blows, burying travelers and causing their death. Sometimes the wind uncovers the corpses and reveals that a chemical reaction has taken place leaving the bodies mummified.

The population in this area is dense. Rivers flow down from the mountains and enter the sea irrigating the region. A large gulf south of the Kingdom of Barbary, at the border of Lower and Upper Africa, is seven hundred



parasangs wide reaching to Lamika and Calicut in the East. Calicut is a large city and the center of trade in spices and precious stones. Lamika is near the Indian Ocean. The sea journey from Lamika to Calicut takes forty days.

Many Jews inhabit the deserts north of Lamika through which the Indus River runs. Jews also live in the deserts north of Calicut among the Gozan mountains and the Gozan Rivers. They are ruled by their own kings. Moslems live between these two groups of Jews. They persecute them and prevent their unification.

Christian authors of Orhot Olam say that the Jewish and Moslem tribes dwell together in the deserts north of Calicut where blacks persecute and degrade them. The author of Olam Hadash, whom Farissol admires and calls a wise Christian explorer and a lover of truth, discusses the Jews who live in Upper India among the Gozan Mountains near the Gozan Rivers. He says the Jews work in Calicut where they deal in spices and control the pepper trade. This author says that the River Sambatyon is in Upper India between the Ganges and Habur Rivers, the Gozan Mountains, and the cities of Media. The Sambatyon separates India from the Jewish Kingdom. Farissol accepts the opinion of Olam Hadash's author. He says that the Talmud refers to the River Sambatyon. This proves the River's existence, says Farissol, for the sages of the Talmud speak God's words. Those who doubt the Talmud are fools.

Joseph ben Gurion HaCohen furnishes additional proof of the Sambatyon's existence. In the last volume of Wars of the Jews he states that the Roman Emperor Titus found the Sambatyon and crossed it on the Sabbath when its flow ceased. The Jews who lived on the other side welcomed and honored him.

### Chapter Twenty-Five

The author of Olam Hadash wrote that the journey from Lisbon to Calicut by sea is a distance of 3,800 parasangs or 15,200 miles. It takes six months. The land of Fratigiani, he adds, is north of Calicut, far from the sea. Many Jews live there. This fact was confirmed by a group of Christian priests who sailed from Rome to Calicut. On their return they reported to Duke Ercolis I of Ferrara about the Jews who live in Calicut, Lamika, and Fratigiani.

Calicut's king is great and honored. He dwells in a magnificent palace built of marble and clay. His clothing is made of silk and gold. Calicut's residents are vegetarians. They eat grains, barley, fruit, sugar, honey, butter, and milk. They do not eat cattle, fowl, or fish. Their houses are built of marble and various kinds of clay. Most houses do not have upper stories. The people believe that all life is sacred. They believe in the transmigration of souls. Sometimes a person will be reincarnated

as an animal, therefore it is a great crime to kill any living thing. Calicut is the center of the spice trade. Calicut is also a commodity trading center. European traders buy nuts, precious stones, pearls, minerals, sandalwood, and wild animals. The European traders sell textiles from Flanders and Milan, as well as linen, flax, and wool.

Sailors and Arabs report that to the north of Calicut a powerful king rules over a large population of black natives who dress in silk garments and robes that they pull over them and drag along the ground. They are idolators who by law are not allowed to honor any Jew.

#### Chapter Twenty-Six

Lamika is located on a cape south of the entrance to the Red Sea. Calicut is located on a cape opposite Lamika, about a forty-day sea journey away. Between the two capes is a sea called Sinum Parsicum that borders on Persia and Babylonia. Its name is derived from the Sufi whose faith is close to that of the Moslems. Sinum Parsicum is also called the Persian Sea.

India Ganges is a region that borders on the Indian Ocean and the Ganges River. The region of India Istra borders on the Indian Ocean. Sinum Magnum is the area at the southern end of the world, according to Ptolemy. Sinarum Ranianum is the region north of India. The regions

of Scotania and Sarmatsia Superior and Inferior are in the far north of the world.

There are pearl beds in the waters of the islands surrounding Calicut. A pearl diver wears a belt connected to a long rope and a leather hat that covers his face. The diver holds a leather rod in his mouth that is attached to his hat sticking out of the water. This enables him to breathe. He also wears a bag around his neck that holds the pearls. The first rope connects the diver to his boat. The diver pulls on a second rope that rings a bell and informs the deckhands that he wants to come up. Round pearls that are found within oyster shells are the most costly. Pearls found in sand are irregularly shaped and less valuable. There are differing opinions as to how pearls are formed. Some say that the pearl forms within the live oyster. The oyster then weakens and dies, leaving only the pearl. Others say that a dew drop enters the oyster and hardens to form a pearl.

Before the Portuguese circumnavigated Africa, camel caravans moved Indian spices, perfumes, and drugs. The caravans originated in Calicut and traveled through the desert to Damascus, Beirut, Jaffa, and Alexandria where the Venetians bought the goods and shipped them to Europe. The Venetians lost their dominance in trade after the Portuguese reached India. The Portuguese supplied Western Europe directly by ship supplanting the Venetians. The

number of caravans decreased, the price of the Venetian's goods doubled, and their Indian trade diminished. Farissol speculates that the Venetians will not make the sea journey to India because they are afraid of crossing into Spanish territory. The Portuguese, he adds, fulfill Western Europe's need for Indian goods. The traders from Venice, Genoa, and Livorno are no longer needed to bring spices to Europe.

### Chapter Twenty-Seven

Farissol devotes this chapter to a description of the major islands he knows. The islands in northern Europe are England, Scotland, and Ireland, each ruled by its own king. There are many islands off the West African coast. Thirty islands lie off Cape Cantin. The Canaries, Sancti, and Madeira islands lie off Cape Verde. The Cannibali islands, whose inhabitants eat human flesh, are far distant from Cape Verde. Twenty islands lie at various distances off the Cape of Good Hope.

The most important islands in the Indian Ocean are Madagascar and Zanzibar. The author of Olam Hadash says there are fifteen hundred islands in the Indian Ocean, many of which send their goods to Calicut.

According to Ptolemy, Trofabana lies below the Equator near the coast of India. Farissol says it lies between Persia and Sinum Magnum at the farthest end of the Indian Ocean. Its inhabitants are black. They deal in

spices, drugs, perfumes, gems, and pearls, which they bring to Calicut. Among Trofabana's many animals are huge birds the size of oxen that eat men, cattle, and large animals. They nest on hilltops in populated areas. A man once climbed a hill near his home and attacked a bird's nest and destroyed its eggs before fleeing for his life. When the bird returned and saw the broken eggs it cried so loudly that it was heard two parasangs away. It soon became weak, fell off the hill, and died.

#### Chapter Twenty-Eight

Sinum Magnum is located at the eastern end of the Indian land mass. The earth's populated areas are expanding. Deserts, mountains, and forests are undergoing settlement. Christian ships sailed eastward. In the course of their journeys they discovered many islands that contain valuable things. The Christians discovered the Kingdom of Balor where many Jews live. They also discovered the land of Tibet, located to the northeast of India. There is a city in Tibet unlike any other in the world. It contains many precious items. Its inhabitants are sun worshippers. This is the northern limit of human habitation. It is so cold there that the barley dances.

Farissol concludes this chapter by saying that he will now discuss the New World called America that was discovered

by Christopher Columbus. Christopher Columbus, he adds, has no relationship or connection with Jews.

### Chapter Twenty-Nine

The explorers call the lands south of the Equator the Torrid Zone. They thought that no one could possibly live below the Equator because the heat is too intense. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope put an end to this idea.

Farissol heard that new lands existed south of the Equator. when he was in Florence during the reign of Lorenzo di Medici when the Sultan of Egypt gave Florence a giraffe. This took place in 1485. He received confirmation that these lands existed from a political exile at the court of Ercolis I of Ferrara.

The King of Spain ordered his ships on a six-month journey beyond Cape Verde and the Canary Islands. The ships sailed southeast for two and a half months. The sailors were running out of food, water, and hope when they sighted a large, green, mountainous land. The sailors thought they had discovered an island, but after they sailed along its shoreline for one thousand parasangs they concluded that they had discovered a large land mass. The sailors called their discovery the New World because of its great size. The New World was located below the Pole of the Sea of Antartica beyond the constellation of Capricorn.

Lions, tigers, snakes, and insects fill the New World's forests. Its rivers contain sweet water and an enormous amount of gold. The seashore is filled with precious stones and mother of pearl. Its inhabitants have black skin and practice sorcery. All their property is public. They lack the basic European institutions of king, law, and religion. They wear no clothes and live in holes, caves, and dens. They take captives whom they fatten, kill, and salt as Christians do to their pigs. These people expose their buttocks and genitals. The women comport themselves like those on the lowest rung of European society. They grease the men's penises to increase their thickness. They copulate like animals. They have intercourse with sons, mothers, brothers, and sisters consecutively. The men take women, copulate with them, and then dismiss them. They sometimes become jealous of other men and fight each other with bows, arrows, stones, and clubs. These people are seldom ill. They cure themselves with tree roots when they are sick. They catch fish with nets.

### Chapter Thirty

Farissol accepts the literal meaning of Scripture. For him the Torah's words are literally true. He quotes the Talmudic dictum from B. Shabbat 63a, "A verse cannot depart from its literal meaning," to support his statement. Maimonides, in Moreh Nevuhim 2:42, said that Scripture



needs interpretation. The three men who visited Abraham in Genesis 18:12 were not real human beings but rather a prophetic vision. Nachmanides, in his commentary on Genesis 18:2, rebuked Maimonides and asserted that Scripture is literally true.

Scripture says that the Garden of Eden is located in the East in a land of temperate climate. Farissol states that the Garden of Eden cannot be located below the Equator or in Arabia Felix because the heat is too great. It is not known to be anywhere in the regions of Asia. He then examines the location of the four rivers that flow through the Garden of Eden according to Genesis 2:11. They are the Hidekel, the Perat, the Pishon, and the Gihon. The Pishon is the Nile River that begins in the Mountains of the Moon and traverses Egypt on its way to the sea. The Gihon is the Senegal River that flows through Cush, Ophir, and Havila, where the explorers found the gold that Genesis 2:11 said existed. The Senegal River flows through Senegal and Gambia before reaching the sea.

The Hidekel is the Tigris whose source is the mountains of Northern India near the Caspian Sea. The Perat is the Euphrates which flows from the Armenian Mountains and ultimately reaches the Persian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Farissol believes that the region of the Mountains of the Moon in Africa is the common source of the four rivers. The Tigris and Euphrates flow underground from their source

to eastern Assyria where they gush forth and form the two rivers. Farissol bases his opinion on Nachmanides' commentary on Genesis 3:22 that many rivers come from their source and flow underground for a great distance before breaking forth from the earth and resuming their course above ground.

Farissol concludes this chapter and manuscript by saying,

This is what I, Abraham Farissol, a righteous and upright Jew, a resident of Ferrara, intended to write in this letter. Today is Rosh Chodesh of Kislev, 1525. Let me give it as a gift to an important prince in Israel for a perfect memorial, may he forever rest in the womb of Israel.

### Chapter Three: Farissol's Geography

Farissol premises his concept of geophraphy on several basic assumptions. He believes that the earth is round<sup>1</sup> and that the sun provides the earth with its heat.<sup>2</sup> He describes how the planets circle one another in a movement similar to the skin of an onion<sup>3</sup> and how the constellations serve as a sailor's guide.<sup>4</sup>

Farissol discusses in detail the explorations of the Spanish and Portuguese. The explorers set out to discover the trade route to India and reap the profits of new trade. They found riches, developed trade, and discovered new lands.

Farissol describes many of the new discoveries. He writes that Christopher Columbus Genofansi discovered the Canary Islands,<sup>5</sup> also called the Sfaniali Islands and the Fortunati Islands.<sup>6</sup>

Portuguese sailors circumnavigated the African land mass.<sup>7</sup> They named their new discoveries calling the large protruding land mass at the tip of South Africa Capo Dibona Sferantza, The Cape of Good Hope.<sup>8</sup> They named another cape Capo Salorum, the Holy Cape.<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese named rivers after holy days, calling them the Santa Ana and the Santa Yacobi.<sup>10</sup> They also claimed land along the eastern coast of Africa. Their territory's northern border was Malindi, which is now Kenya.<sup>11</sup> The Portuguese King

Henry IV built a fortress at Capo Salorum.<sup>12</sup>

Farissol claims that the Portuguese discovered the Biblical land of Ophir where they found large amounts of gold and built a fortress.<sup>13</sup> He places Ophir in the general area of lower Cush. Ophir lies between the Canary Islands<sup>14</sup> to the north and the land of Cannabali to the south. Farissol is certain that Gambia on the West African coast is Ophir's exact location. He reasons that King Solomon sent seventy-five ships through the Red Sea circumnavigating Africa and reaching Ophir where they found gold. Since Gambia contains gold, says Farissol, it must be the<sup>15</sup> Biblical land of Ophir.

The Portuguese circumnavigated Africa and discovered the sea route to Calicut in India. The new sea route changed trade patterns. Previously, caravans originating in Calicut carried Indian goods through the long deserts to Alexandria, Jaffa, Beirut, and Damascus where Venetian traders bought the goods and shipped them for sale to<sup>16</sup> Europe. After they discovered the sea route, Portuguese shipped Indian goods directly from India to Europe. Thus the Portuguese came to dominate Indian trade and eliminate<sup>17</sup> the Venetian traders.

Farissol also writes that Christopher Columbus discovered<sup>18</sup> the New World. He describes how Spanish sailors sailed southeast for two and a half months when they discovered what they thought was an island. The sailors moved along

the shoreline for one thousand parasangs. They concluded that they had discovered a large land mass which they called the New World<sup>19</sup> because of its great size. This region was located below the pole of the Antarctic Sea and beyond<sup>20</sup> the sign of the Capricorn.

Farissol gives a great deal of geographical information in his text. He writes that Israel is the center of the world<sup>21</sup> and Jerusalem is the world's most important city.<sup>22</sup> He describes Israel as located between thirty-three and thirty-four degrees latitude and between the fourth and fifth zones of longitude.<sup>23</sup> He quotes from the Book of Deuteronomy 1:7, "to the great river, the river Euphrates," to support his contention that Israel's western border is<sup>24</sup> the Nile River and its eastern border is the Euphrates.

The Kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Sihon, and Og<sup>25</sup> are now Arab kingdoms. The rabbis called Syria the land of Aram.<sup>26</sup> Beyond the deserts of Aram, along the Damascus-Calicut road, is the land of Krovani through which caravans passed on their way from Calicut to the Mediterranean<sup>27</sup> ports.

Farissol calls the lands of Media and Persia "Sufi land"<sup>28</sup> because many of their inhabitants are Sufis<sup>29</sup> whose religion is similar to that of the Moslems.<sup>30</sup> The Persian Sea is called Sinum Parsikum.

He calls the Mediterrean Sea the Philistine Sea and<sup>31</sup> the Middle Sea. Along the Mediterranean on the North

African coast are many old, distinguished, and long-populated Arab kingdoms that Farissol calls this region Eretz Edom.<sup>32</sup> For him Carthage is another name for Tunis.<sup>33</sup>

Farissol also describes Europe. Scotland, he says, is an island, separated from England by a narrow strip of water.<sup>34</sup> He describes Venice's trade with Flanders as very important. The trip by sea he says, usually took about forty days, but delays could extend the journey up to eighteen months. The distance was between three and four thousand miles. Bad weather and pirates impeded the journey.<sup>35</sup> Farissol mentions that between Flanders and Venice ships had to pass the Kingdom of the Basques.<sup>36</sup>

He calls the Western part of Dalmatia Sikiabina and Macedonia he calls Albania. The area from Thrace to Constantinople in Greece he calls the region of Tagur.<sup>37</sup> The Tanais River, located north of Constantinople, is the border between Europe and Asia.<sup>38</sup> Russia's southern border is the Black Sea. Tartary, the home of many frightening and terrible people, is north of the Black Sea.<sup>39</sup>

Farissol mentions two unknown lands. He refers to the Kingdom of Sirka as a large a wonderful place full of deserts, mountains, spices, animals, and strange birds.<sup>40</sup> Farissol twice mentions the Kingdom of Kelev Hagadol, the Kingdom of the Great Dog, whose location until recently was

completely unknown. Modern scholarship reveals that Farissol meant to write "the Kingdom of the Great Khan" but confused the genitive of Khan, "khanis," with "canis." Hence, "the great Khan" became "the great dog."<sup>41</sup>

Farissol is greatly concerned with finding the source of the Nile and the four rivers which flowed through the Garden of Eden. For him the Nile begins at the Mountains of the Moon and flows through Miror, Damietta, and Alexandria, where it reaches the Mediterranean.<sup>42</sup> The Mountains of the Moon separate Upper and Lower Egypt. The source of the Senegal River is the Nile. It empties into the sea in Gambia.<sup>43</sup>

Farissol identifies the Garden of Eden's four rivers as listed in Genesis 2:11. The Hidekel is the Tigris, the Perat is the Euphrates, the Pishon is the Nile, and the Gihon is the Senegal. Farissol believes that all four rivers share a common source -- the Mountains of the Moon. He accepts the opinion of Nachmanides who stated in his commentary on Genesis 3:22 that the source of the four rivers is the Mountains of the Moon. Both Farissol and Nachmanides believe the Tigris and Euphrates flow underground from the Mountains of the Moon in Africa to northern Mesopotamia where they burst forth and begin their journey to the Persian Gulf. The Nile and the Senegal simply flow above ground.<sup>44</sup>

Farissol strongly believes that the River Sambatyon is real.<sup>45</sup> He says that those who deny its existence are

fools and are guilty because they deny the words of our  
sages whose words come from God.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, he specif-  
ically locates the Sambatyon north of Calicut. He quotes  
the author of Sefer Olam Hadash who states that the  
Sambatyon is real and is located in upper India; its  
boundaries are the Ganges River, the Habur River, the  
Gozen Mountains, and the cities of Media.<sup>47</sup> He also  
quotes Josephus, who writes in the Wars of the Jews (the  
last volume, part two, capital thirty-five) that the  
Emperor Titus reached the Sambatyon on returning from his  
journey to Persia and Media. Titus there discovered a  
group of Jews who received and honored him and called the  
river, "the Sambatyon." The Sambatyon stopped flowing  
in observance of the Sabbath, making it possible for  
Titus to cross.<sup>48</sup>



## Chapter Four - Anthropology

Farissol describes native customs and folkways to satisfy his reader's curiosity.<sup>1</sup> He is selective in the details he relates because many, he says, are of secondary importance.<sup>2</sup>

Farissol describes at great length the customs of the African natives whom the Portuguese met during the course of their travels.

The African natives are black and naked.<sup>3</sup> Their entire region is steeped in carnality. The people copulate continuously. The women yearn for, and search out, men with large penises. The men strive to enlarge their penises by stretching and greasing them.<sup>4</sup> The men constantly seek intercourse. They believe that it improves their health and enlarges the size of their genital organs. The men increase their penile thickness by greasing their genitals with various herbs and grasses.<sup>5</sup> The native women have a custom in which they split each of their two breasts in half in order to create four breasts. They tie ropes so tightly around each breast that fissures are made, resulting in the creation of four breasts. Farissol does not understand the purpose of this custom and writes with disdain that the native women think this beautifies them.<sup>6</sup>

The natives tatoo the images of animals and birds into their skin. Farissol admits doubt as to the reason for this,

but he suggests that it may be an idolatrous or cosmetic<sup>7</sup> rite.

Farissol describes the customs of the New World's inhabitants. These people follow nature. They lack the<sup>8</sup> basic European institutions of king, law, and religion. Many of them are cannibals who eat human flesh. They fatten their captives, kill them and salt them, just as<sup>9</sup> Christians do to their pigs.

The women on a newly discovered island in the New World<sup>10</sup> comport themselves like women in society's lowest wrung. The island's king is the first to copulate with the<sup>11</sup> virgin women. The New World's inhabitants expose their genitals and buttocks. The women copulate like animals and are always eager for sexual intercourse. They grease and pull men's penises to increase their size. The women copulate consecutively with a son, mother, brother, and<sup>12</sup> sister.

Farissol writes about an island entirely inhabited by a warring race of women. They take male captives, copulate with them, and, after giving birth they send away the male babies. They are idolators who worship two gods, Zeus<sup>13</sup> and Porimus. Each day they sacrifice a horse to them.

Farissol writes about the customs of Calicut's inhabitants. The people of Calicut are vegetarians. They<sup>14</sup> do not eat the meat of cattle, fowl, or fish. They are able to eat grains, fruit, vegetables, and sugar<sup>15</sup> filled foods. The Calicuts believe in the transmigration

of souls. For them it is a crime to kill any animal or  
living thing because it may be a reincarnated man.<sup>16</sup>  
Destroying any kind of life in Calicut is a criminal  
act punishable by death.<sup>17</sup>

Farissol writes that the inhabitants of Fratigiani in  
the region north of Calicut wear robes they pull over them  
that drag along the ground.<sup>18</sup>

The people of Trofabana, says Farissol, have black  
skin and wear white cotton garments covering half their  
bodies. They are pagans who worship idols and planets.<sup>19</sup>

Farissol transmits quite a lot of zoological information.  
He writes that the Cape Verde islands are full of large  
doves, rabbits, snakes, and strange animals.<sup>20</sup> He does not  
write about the wildlife of Trofabana except for its  
birds, which are the size of oxen. They feed on men,  
cattle, and large animals. They build their nests on  
hilltops in populated areas. The inhabitants greatly  
fear these birds. One man climbed a hill and while a bird  
was hunting, attacked its nest, destroyed its eggs and  
fled. The bird returned to find her eggs broken. She  
was so distraught that her cries were heard two parasangs  
away. She weakened, fell from the hill and died.<sup>21</sup>

Farissol describes the sea monsters that live in the  
Indian Ocean. They are huge and so powerful they easily  
overturn boats. Scholars claimed that one of these monsters  
once swallowed a horse and its rider. Farissol opposes  
this claim, saying that the monster's gullet is too small.<sup>22</sup>

He describes how pearls form within oysters in two ways, internally and externally. When the pearl forms internally, the oyster withers and the pearl remains. When it forms externally, a dew drop enters the oyster and<sup>23</sup> hardens its entrails, which become a pearl. Farissol describes how divers search for pearls. A diver goes over the side of a boat attached to two ropes. One rope encircles his waist and is connected to a pulley. The diver holds a second rope connected to a bell. When the diver wants to come up, he pulls the rope ringing the bell.<sup>24</sup> The sailors then pull him up by the first rope.

Farissol provides his readers with some interesting miscellaneous information. He writes that boats containing iron should not approach the Calamity Islands in the Red Sea for the islands act as a magnet and pull the boat<sup>25</sup> towards them.

He says the area of Cape Cantin in West Africa<sup>26</sup> experiences a severe shortage of salt.

He tells us Senegal's weather is rarely cold. When<sup>27</sup> it is cold it resembles April in Italy.

Farissol calls Cape Verde the green cape because of all its green trees. He calls Cape Blanco the white<sup>28</sup> cape because of all its white sand.

## Chapter Five - Jewish Settlements

Farissol writes extensively about Jewish settlements in the eastern part of the world. He says that many Jews live in the lands near the Indian Ocean.<sup>1</sup> Jewish settlement in the Kingdom of Fratigiani is well known.<sup>2</sup> Many Jews live on the fifteen hundred islands off the coast of Calicut.<sup>3</sup>

The Christian author of Olam Hadash says that many Jews deal in spices and pepper in Calicut, according to Farissol. These Jews are from tribes north of Calicut in the Gozan Mountains.<sup>4</sup>

A group of priests who once lived in Calicut returned to Rome. They reported to Duke Encolis I of Ferrara about Calicut's Jews, their kings, and their deeds.<sup>5</sup>

Many Jews live north of the deserts of Calicut under the rule of their own kings.<sup>6</sup> The editor of this edition of the Iggeret Orhot Olam writes that the Jews in this region originally possessed their own government, but their enemies conquered them. Their conquerors made them forget the Torah. They took property, killed many Jews, and forced them to leave India.<sup>7</sup> Christian authors of travel guides state that many Jews and Moslems live north of Calicut's deserts where they are persecuted and degraded by the blacks who rule over them.<sup>8</sup>

The Jews who live in the large deserts north of Lamika

by the Indus Rivers are very far from the Jews who live in the regions north of Calicut.

Many Jews live in tents and wood houses in the deserts<sup>9</sup> of Habur where many Jewish princes rule over them.<sup>10</sup> This region is also called Arabia Felix. These Jews hope to return to Israel in the future by sailing through<sup>11</sup> the Red Sea in their swift boats. Portuguese sailors discovered the Jews in this region during their explorations<sup>12</sup> in India.

Farissol believes that many Jews live under the rule of Jewish princes in the desert of Habur. The editor of this edition claims that Jews lacked their own kingdom from the beginning of the Diaspora to the present time. He quotes Christian scholars who read the Iggeret Orhot Olam in Latin. They asserted that even though Farissol was a sage and knew the geography of the world, a Jewish kingdom in Arabia Felix never existed. The editor also quotes from Maimonides' Iggeret Temen, a letter to Yemen's Jews. Maimonides, says the editor, wrote to console the Jews who had to endure the yoke of exile, proving that a<sup>13</sup> Jewish kingdom did not exist in Arabia Felix.

Many Jews inhabit the mountainous region of Soctania Istra. These Jews are locked in this area and are denied<sup>14</sup> exit. There are many Jews closed in and denied exit from<sup>15</sup> the kingdom of Balor, an island east of Sinum Magnum.

Farissol writes about a group of Portuguese colonists

who settled an uninhabited island southwest of Southern Africa. They called the island Partem Sanctam or the Holy Coast. This occurred at the same time the Portuguese expelled Portugal's Jews. Many Marranos fled Portugal for Partem Santam where they hoped to find rest and  
<sup>16</sup>  
 respite.

Farissol discusses at great length the journeys of the Jew named David ben Shlomo, General of the Army of  
<sup>17</sup>  
 Israel, better known to us as David Reubeni.

David Reubeni comes from a group of two Jewish tribes that live in tents like Bedouins in the desert of Habur. Reubeni first visited Israel in the sixth month of 1523. He sent a letter in Hebrew, to the Venetian Doge in which he announced his presence in Israel, explained his identity,  
<sup>18</sup>  
 and estimated the time of his arrival in Venice. Reubeni reached Venice in 1524 and later traveled to Rome. In Rome Reubeni revealed the purpose of his mission: he planned to bring back stone-throwing catapults and fire-throwing engines to the Jews of Arabia. The Jews planned to use these weapons in a campaign to defeat the Moslems who separated their two tribes. The two Jewish tribes then planned to unite and conquer the land of Israel. Reubeni met with Pope Clement VII who agreed in the month of Marchesvan, 1525, to give Reubeni the weapons he wanted along with Jewish and Christian technicians to operate them. The Pope agreed to send a ship full of these weapons

and technicians to Arabia Felix to join the Jews' war  
19  
against the Moslems. Reubeni reported that the ten  
lost tribes still existed and lived near Lamika and Guda  
20  
in the deserts near the Red Sea.



## Chapter Six - Source

Farissol draws his information from a number of different sources in writing the Iggeret Orhot Olam. He mentions many of these sources and quotes freely from them. We can divide his sources into three categories: the few geographical references on which he relies extensively, other reference works, and traditional Jewish sources. We can examine his sources and the information he culls from them.

Ptolemy's geographical theories influences Farissol more than those of any other geographer.<sup>1</sup> Farissol writes that Ptolemy created a reference system which ordered the world. Ptolemy divided the world into sixty-five degrees from north to south and ninety degrees from east to west, corresponding to latitude and longitude.<sup>2</sup> Ptolemy also divided the world into seven regions. Farissol, and most geographers,<sup>3</sup> approve of Ptolemy's divisions.

Farissol quotes Ptolemy in saying that there are many kingdoms and settlements along the Persian Sea. In this region the deserts that reach to the earth's end<sup>4</sup> originate.

Ptolemy<sup>5</sup> did not write about any area east of Sinum Magnum<sup>6</sup> the great gulf beyond the Malay peninsula, because his geographical knowledge ended there. Ptolemy knew nothing<sup>7</sup> of southern Africa, which he called Terra Incognita.

Farissol quotes Yosipon who said that Ham's descendants populate Africa, Shem's descendants populate Asia, and Yaphet's descendants populate Europe.

Farissol quotes at length from Joseph ben Gurion HaCohen's Wars of the Jews. The author of this book is better known as Josephus. Josephus thought that Ham's descendants populated Africa, Shem's descendants populated Asia, and Yaphet's descendants populated Europe. Josephus also wrote in Wars of the Jews that the Roman Emperor Titus discovered the River Sambatyon. The river stopped flowing on the Sabbath, at which time Titus crossed to the other side where Jews welcomed and honored him.

Farissol quotes extensively from the book he calls Olam Hadash whose author was then unknown. Farissol tells us he was a Christian explorer, scholar, and lover of truth. His book was published in Venice after Columbus' discovery of the New World. Recent research has revealed that the author was Francanda Montalboddo, an Italian contemporary of Farissol who wrote the popular travel text, Paesi Novamente Retrovati. Farissol calls this work Sefer Olam Hadash and borrows extensively from it. In fact, it is the chief source for the Iggeret Orhot Olam.

Montalboddo tells us, by way of Farissol that the Portuguese called the African lands they discovered "Ophir." The journey from Calicut to Lisbon is 3,800 parasangs or 15,200 miles. The River Sambatyon is a real entity

located in Upper India between the Ganges and Habur Rivers,<sup>16</sup>  
the Gozan Mountains and the cities of Media. There are  
more than 1,500 islands off the coasts of Calicut and<sup>17</sup>  
Lamika.

Farissol recounts a piece of information which he  
heard at the court of Duke Ercolis I of Ferrara. A  
political exile fled the Italian city of Piombina and sailed  
in the South Atlantic for twenty years. He affirmed that<sup>18</sup>  
land existed far south of the Equator.

Farissol gathers information and quotes from other  
sources. He refers to his own book, Magen Avraham, to<sup>19</sup>  
buttress his argument that Jews live in India. He  
mentions a number of books by Ptolemy, Christians, and  
explorers, books which he calls Orhot Olam. This indicates<sup>20</sup>  
that Orhot Olam was a particular genre of travel text.

Farissol reads the books of sailors who describe<sup>21</sup>  
travel routes and chart coastlines. He says that  
according to these books there are many islands off the<sup>22</sup>  
coast of Calicut. Sailors' opinions differ as to the  
duration of the journey between Lamika and Calicut. Some<sup>23</sup>  
say it takes forty days while others say three or four<sup>24</sup>  
days. Farissol disagrees with both sources and says<sup>25</sup>  
the journey takes longer than forty days.

Farissol is familiar with the Mappa Mundi that many  
geographers from Germany, Venice, and Florence wrote.<sup>26</sup>  
The Mappa Mundi describes the whole Eastern world

using maps of the new discoveries<sup>27</sup> and dividing the world  
into degrees and belts.<sup>28</sup>

Farissol mentions that the Supplementum Chronicorum  
supports his views about the world's population distri-  
bution.<sup>29</sup>

Farissol quotes from the work of German Christian  
scholars, Natur Geschichte, to describe animal life in the  
new lands.<sup>30</sup>

Farissol cites proof texts from traditional Jewish  
sources to support his arguments. He uses verses from the  
Bible, Talmud, Maimonides' Moreh Nevuhim, and Nachmanides'  
Biblical commentary. Since Farissol believes the Bible's  
words are true, the arguments that they support are then  
true regardless of how far they are removed from their  
original context. He argues that the words of the Torah  
should be taken literally. His proof text is B. Shabbat 63A,  
"R. Abahu said: 'A verse cannot depart from its plain  
meaning.'<sup>31</sup>" Maimonides, in Moreh Nevuhim 2:42, denies  
Farissol's claim. He states that the Torah's words  
need interpretation. The Rambam states that the three  
angels who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18:2 were not  
real human beings but rather a prophetic vision.<sup>32</sup>  
Farissol points to Nachmanides' refutation of Maimonides'  
statement about the three angels in the Ramban's commentary  
on Genesis 18:22 as proof that Maimonides erred about  
the three angels.

Nachmanides wrote that the angels who appeared to Abraham were human beings and that the Torah must be interpreted according to its literal meaning, thus supporting Farissol's arguments.<sup>33</sup>

Farissol cites Exodus 23:31, "I will set your border from the Red Sea," to support his argument that Israel's western border begins at the Nile River.<sup>34</sup> He quotes Deuteronomy 1:7, "to the great river, the River Euphrates," to give credence to his position that Israel's eastern border is the Euphrates River.<sup>35</sup> He quotes Zachariah 9:1, "Damascus is its resting place," to prove that Damascus,<sup>36</sup> Aram, and the land of the Philistines belong to Israel.

Farissol cites Genesis 2:8, "The Lord planted a garden in Eden," to prove the Garden of Eden's existence.<sup>37</sup> The second half of the verse, "the Garden of Eden is east," demonstrates that the Garden of Eden is the eastern part of the world.<sup>38</sup> He quotes Daniel 10:4, "He sat by the River Tigris," to illustrate that cosmographers and explorers knew long ago that the Garden of Eden did not lie in the Tigris River region.<sup>39</sup> Farissol suggests that Arabia Felix may be the Garden of Eden's location because it states in II Kings 19:12, "in Aden which is in Telsar."<sup>40</sup>

The four rivers which flow through the Garden of Eden have the Mountains of the Moon in Africa as their common source. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which Farissol

identifies with the Rivers Hidekel and Perat, leave their source and flow underground to Assyria where they burst forth and resume their course about ground. Farissol proves this through his citation of Genesis 2:14, "...which goes east of Assyria."<sup>41</sup>

There are two different rivers with the name of Gihon, says Farissol, one in Jerusalem and the other in Africa, which he identifies as the Senegal River. Farissol demonstrates the existence of the Gihon in Jerusalem when he quotes I Kings 1:33, "Bring him down to Gihon,"<sup>42</sup>

Farissol refers to Nachmanides' commentary on Genesis 3:22 to support his view that the Mountains of the Moon are the common source of the four rivers in the Garden of Eden. Nachmanides writes that many rivers leave their source and then enter the earth's bowels for a journey of many days before they break forth again and flow from under mountains at a distant place.<sup>43</sup> This explains how it is possible that four rivers have a common source.

Farissol writes that the Bible mentions newly discovered lands. He cites Isaiah 37:12, "People of Eden who were in Telsar," to support his opinion. Telsar, he says, is south of Upper India.<sup>44</sup> The Bible refers to Africa's regions by the names Cushim, Putim, and Ludim. This is demonstrated by the verse, "Cush and Put, that grasp the shield, and the Ludim who grasp and draw the bow,"<sup>45</sup> Jeremiah 46:9. Farissol quotes II Kings 19:9, "He heard that Terhakah, King of Cush," to emphasize that King

Solomon had relations with Cush and sent his ships there.<sup>46</sup>  
 Israel's kings knew the sea route from Etzion Geber to  
 Cush. King Jehosophat of Judah built Tarshish ships to  
 sail to Ophir for gold, "but did not sail because the  
 ships were wrecked at Etzion Geber, I Kings 22:19<sup>47</sup>  
 Farissol cites the phrase from Ecclesiastes 1:9, "there  
 is nothing new under the sun," to demonstrate that  
 King David and King Solomon knew of the land of Ophir<sup>48</sup>  
 that the Portuguese had only recently rediscovered.  
 Solomon became rich from his diggings in Ophir, according  
 to I Kings 9:26-28, "...They came to Ophir; there they  
 obtained gold in the amount of 420 talents which they  
 delivered to King Solomon."<sup>39</sup>

Farissol quotes from the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 65:b,  
 to prove the existence of the River Sambatyon: "How does  
 this day (the Sabbath) differ from other days? ...How  
 does one man differ from another...? Let the River  
 Sambatyon prove it...." According to legend, the  
 Sambatyon ceases flowing on the Sabbath, therefore marking  
 it as a special day. The citation does not prove the  
 Sambatyon's existence; it only exhibits Farissol's knowledge<sup>50</sup>  
 of the sources and his belief in the legend. The  
 Sambatyon, writes Farissol, is found in Upper India between  
 the Ganges and Habur Rivers, the Gozen Mountains, and the  
 cities of Media. He cites II Kings 16:9, "He departed  
 from Kir," as his proof of this, for Kir, says Farissol,  
 is in the region of Media.<sup>51</sup>

Farissol claims that the Jews who dwell in the deserts of Arabia Felix and Lamika shall some day return to Israel in their boats. His proof for this is Isaiah 18:2, "Who sends messengers by the sea even in vessels of papyrus on the water. Go, you swift messengers, to a nation tall<sup>52</sup> and of glossy skin."

Farissol uses Biblical sources as proof texts in areas other than those of Jewish concern. He writes that the Senegalese people in West Africa practice magic by reciting incantations that drive the demons to Azazel in the wilderness. He proves this by citing Leviticus 16:10,<sup>53</sup> "...to Azazel in the wilderness." Farissol proves that God created the sea monsters by quoting Psalm 107:23-24, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business<sup>54</sup> in great waters, these saw the works of the Lord,"



Chapter One - Notes

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### Chapter Three - Notes

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50. 24:45

51. 24:45

52. 10:10

53. 21:40

54. 23:44

Location	Chapter in which it appears	Place
Edom	2,4,5,8,10,13,15,26	אדום
Unknown	13	אדמיראנטי פריסי
Adriatic Sea	7,11,12,16	אדען
Unknown	30	ים אדריאטיקו
Avignon	12	אובקארטונא
Otranto	11,12	אוסרונטו
Mediterranean Sea	3	ים אולם
Hungary	2,7,11	אונגאריא
Ostia	5,7,12	אוסטיאה
Ophir	13,21,30	אופירה
Atlantic Ocean	1-3,5,7,8,10,12,15,18-20 22-24,26-29	ים אוקינוס
Oran	2,6,12,19,22	אורן
Oshiana	9	אושיאנה
West Africa	15	אזאניגו
West Africa	15	אזינאבא
Eastern Europe	3	הרי אזירפאה
Unknown	19	אטונים
Ireland	3,12,26,27	איברניא
Egypt	22	איגיפטו
South Eastern Europe	11	ים איוזיניאום
Africa	16,17,19,22,30	איטיאופיאה
Northern and Southern Africa	22	שתי אטיאפיאות

Southern Africa	3	איטיאופיאה אינפריאור
Northern Africa	22	איטיהאפיה סופעריאר
Northern Africa	20	איטיהאפיע העליונה
Southern Africa	15,19,20,22,26	אטהיאופיע השפלה
Southern Africa	24	אטהיאופיע התחתונה
West Africa	24	אטהיאפיה באססא
Italy	2,3,7,8,11,12,14, 21,24,26,30	איטליע
Constantinople Region	7	איכזיניאום
Central Asia	28	הרי אימאום
India	14,24,26,28	אינדיא
India Istra	5,9,15,26,28	אינדיא איסטרא
Upper India	27	אינדיא גאנגעטיקא
Upper India	24	אינדיא העליונה
Istria	7,11	איסטריאע
Corfu	7	איקורפו
Europe	2,5,11,26,27	איראפא
Irkanian Sea	2,3,9	ים אירקאנא
Albania	7,11,14	אלבאניע
Alon Mamre	30	אלוני ממרא
Alexandria	3,6,8,11,25,26,30	אלכסנדרי
Alla Marisca	23	אללא מאריסקא
Hellespont	2,3,7	אלספינסטי
Yugoslavia	11	אלקיא
Indian Ocean	25	אי אמברא
America	28,29	אמעריקא
Mediterranean Sea	5-9,11-13,22	ים האמצעי
Madagascar	13	אנגאמא

England	2,3,7,12,15,26,27	אנגליא
Andalusia	8,12	אנדלוסיאע
Antartic Sea	29	ים אנטארטיקו
Ancona	11	אנקונא
Asia	2,5,8,9,14,15,23,25,28,30	אסיא
Assyria	30	אסיריא
Scotland	2	אסקוטיא
Appolonia	11	אפילוניה
Africa	2,5,6,8,9,12-15,28,30	אפריקא
Arabia Felix	3,8,10,14,15,24,30	אראביא פילקיש
Arabian Sea	2,3,8,15	ים אראביקום
Aragon	8,12	ארגון
North Africa	2,12	ארזילא
Archipelago	3,7,11	ארכיפלאג
Mediterranean Sea	8	ים ארי
Aria	3,9	אריאע
West Africa	23	אריה ליאנג
Aram	5,6,8-11,30	ארם
Armenia	5,9,11,30	ארמיניא
Arkisia	9	ארקיסיא
Assyria	30	אשור
Germany	3,7,12,15,26,30	אשכנז
Bari	8	בארי
Caspian Sea Region	3	באזיאנא
Bandamal-West Africa	21,24	באנדאמעל
Barbary	2-6,8,12-15,23,24	בארבאריא
Beirut	5,6,8,11,25,26	בארוט

Barcelona	12	בארצולונע
Babylonia	8-10,26,30	בבל
Boshia	11	בוסניא
Burgundy	12,26	בורגוניא
Middle Europe	3	בורוסטנים
Biscay	14	ביסקאי
Atlantic Ocean	14	ים בימינם
Barletta, Italy	7,11	בירליטה
Balor-West Africa	28	בעלור
Indian Ocean	25	אי בעלצוי
West Africa	23	נהרות בעסוגווי
Bruges	12	בריגייש
Sea of Britain	2	ים הבריטאניע
Brittany	15	בריטיני
Brindisi, Italy	11	ברינודיסע
Gaeta, Italy	7,12	גאיטא
Gaul	7	גאיליאה
Gilbratter Region	12	גאלערן
Gambia	21,30	גאמבארא
Ganges River	3,9,12,24,26	נהרי גאנגיס
Middle East	14	גורא
Indian Ocean	15,23,24,27	גולפור
Upper India	24,26	גוזן
West Africa	15	גוסה האפנונג
Gibraltar	2,5-8,12,13,15,27-29	גיבראלטאר
Senegal River	30	גיחון
Gallipoli	11	גילופולה



Genoa	5,7,12	גינזבא
Garden of Eden	30	גן עדן
Grenada	2,5,12	גראנאטי
Grasse, Southern France	7	גראסא
Greece	5	גראציה
Dalmatia,	7,11,12	דאלמאציה
Damietta, Egypt	2,6,8,11	דאמיאטא
Danube River	7	נהר דאנוביא
Dacia	2,7	דאציה
Ancona, Italy	7	דאנקונא
Balkans	7	באלקאן
Dalmatia	2	דלמאציה
Damascus	5,8-10,15,23,25,26	דמשק
Persia	3,9,26	דראנגיאנא
Northern extremes	1	אי האלנדי
Holland	3,15,26,28	האלנדי
India	3,8,9,13,15,23-26,28,30	הודו
Indian Islands	13	איי הודו
India Istra	26	הודו איסטרא
India Ganges	26	הודו גאנגיס
Indian Ocean	3,8-10,13,15,24,27,30	ים הודו
Upper India	13	הודו העליונה
Lower India	26	הודו התחתונה
Ireland	7,15	היבערניא
Mountains of the Moon	8,20,22,30	הרי הלבנה
Valencia	7,12	ואלינצא
Venice	7,11,12,14-16,24,26	ווינעציע

Verona	12	ווירונא
Verda River, West Africa	23	נהר ווירדע
Zanzibar	13,25,27	זאנזיבאר
Italy	26	זינובים
Indian Ocean Region	25	זילויי אנסולי
West Africa	15	הזינאגי הבריטיני
Sicily	2,3,5,7,11,12	זיציליע
Nice	7	זניצא
Habur, Arabian Peninsula	8,10,14,15,24	חבור
Tigris River	30	חרקל
Africa	30	חווילה
West Africa	15,19	טאנבוט
Angier	2,12	טאנגיר
Don River	2	נהר טאנאם
Tyrrhenian Sea	11,12	ים טאראנטינום
Tartary	7,11,26	טארטיריא
Taranto, Italy	7,11	טאראנטו
Tunis	2,5,6,8,9,12,19,20,22	טונים
Tuscany	5,26	טוסקאנא
Torrid Zone	29	טורידאזאנא
Turkey	2	טורקיא
Tibet	28	טיבוט
West Africa	19	טיגאזא
Tigris River	30	טיגרוס
Terra Incognita	15	טירא אינקאנייטא
West Africa	15	טראמאנטאנא
Trani, Italy	7,11	טראני

Ceylon	1,3,4,9,27	סרופובאנא
Thrace	2,3,7	טרציא
Indian Ocean Region	13,27	אי יאווא מאיור
Judea	4	יודיאה
Giulianova, Italy	11	יוליאענובה
Greece	2,3,7,11,18	יון
Aegean Sea	11	ים ימין
Italy	16	יענאווענסע
Genoa	26	ינובא
Jaffa	6,8,11,26	יפו
Jordan River	10	ירדן
Jerusalem	2,30	ירושלים
Israel	2-4,6,8-11,14,15,30	ישראל
Africa	1,3,13,15,16,19,20,22,26,30	כוש
West African Coastal Waters	22,27	ים כושי
Lower Africa	23,24,26	כוש השפלה
Northern Africa	2	כוש העליונה
Southern Africa	1,2,13	כוש התחתונה
Kingdom of the Great Kahn	9	מלכות הכלב הגדול
Arabia	9	כליבאע
Canaan	2	כנען
Mt. Carmel	8	הר כרמל
Mesopotamia	8,26	ארץ כשדים
Italy	7,11	לאברוצאה
Italy	7,11	לאווילונא
Mediterranean Island of		איי לאזירבום
North African Coast	7	
Black Sea Region	7,11	נהר לאטאנום

Italy	7	לאמארקא
Arabia	8,10,13-15,23-27	לאמיקא
Lanciano, Italy	7,11	לאנצאנו
Apulia, Italy	7,11	לאפוליא
Lebanon	6,8	לבנון
Africa	22	לודים
Lyon	12	ליאון
Libya	3,15	ליבואה
Leghorn, Italy	12,26	ליגורנו
Lisbon	17,25	ליסבאנע
Licia	6,10	ליציאה
Italy	12	ליצי זמונטאלטור
Italy	11	לקאיוזא
North Africa	2,6,12,13,15	מאבריסטאניע ציסארי
Madagascar	13,27	מאדאגאזקר
Greece	7	מאדאן קורין
Madeira	17,18,27	מאדערא
Arabia	19	מאודין
Majorca	2,5,12	מאיורקא
Germany	3,7	מאנייא גירמאנייא
Mesopotamia	8,30	מאסופוטאמיאם
Macedonia	2,5,7,11,12	מצידניע
East African Island	13	מאקארא
North Central Asia	26	ארץ המגוג
Media	2,3,8-10,24,26,30	מדי
Midian	15	מידין
Moab	2,8,10,15	מואב

Monaco	12	מוניגו
Indian Ocean	24	הים המזרחי
Arabia	19	מיסיגאזא
Mediterranean Sea	20,22,30	מיטללענדישע מעהר
Milan	25	מילאן
West Africa	19	מילי
Minorca	2,5,12	מינורקא
Egypt	3,8,30	מירואר
Mediterranean Sea	5,6,11,13,15,16,19,20,30	מארי מעדיטעראניא
Malindi, Kenya	23	מעלינדע
Messina, Sicily	11,12	מעסינא
West African Coastal Waters	18	ים המערבי הדרומי
Egypt	2,3,6,8,10,11,13-15,25,26,30	מצרים
Marseille	5,7,12	מרסעליע
Aral Sea	9	ים מת
Naples	5,7,11,12,26	נאפולי
Nile River	2,3,6,8,10,20,22,30	נילום
Nice	12	ניצאד
Italy	12	סאומנה
Salonika	7,11	סאלוניקא
Piedmont	7	הרי סאליצה
Salerno, Italy	12	סאלרונא
West Africa River	27	סאנטא אנא
Canary Islands	27	אינסולי סאנקטי
Persia	3	סאקא
Sardinia	2,3,5,12	סארדיניע
Italy	12	סארזאנא

Dead Sea	2,3,8,10,13-15,23,24,26,30	ים סוף
Shushan, Persia		סוסיאנה
Syria	6,8,9	סוריה
Persia	8,9,26	ארצות הסופי
Egypt	3	סיגים באיגיפטו
Jordan	10,15	סיחון
Persia	8	סינום
Persian Gulf Region	26,26	סינום בארבאריקום
China	2,5,9,15,24,26-28	סינום מאניום
Persian Gulf Region	3,23,24,26	סינום פערסיקום
East Asia	2,5,26	סינום רגיא
Siena	12	סיינא
Mount Sinai	2,8,13,15,23,24,26	הר סיני
Senegal	11,13,20,21	סינגאליא
West Africa	23	נהר סיפינצענטי
Dalmatia	7,11,12	סיקייאבינאע
Near East	3,9,28	סיריקא
River Sambatyon	2,8,24	נהר סמבטיון
Senegal	30	סענעגא
Canary Islands	14,18,27,29	ספאניאלע
La Spezia	7	ספיצא
Spain	2,3,5-8,12,13,15,26,29	ספרד
Near East	3,9,26,30	סקוטאניא
Scotland	3,7,12,15,26,27	סקוציא
Persian Region	2,3,8,10,26,30	סרמאציא
Ireland	12	אי עבורניא
Aden	8,30	עדן

Jordan	15	ערג
Turkey	2,5,9,11	עוץ
Jordan	2,10	עמון
Jordan	8,10	עמלק
Eilat	13,26	עציון גבר
Arabia	10	מלכי הערב
West African Island	17	פאוני
Italy	26	פאטרימוניא
Famagusta, Cyprus	11	פאמאגוסטא
Fano, Italy	11	פאנו
Hungary	11	פאנוניאע
Strait of Messina	7	פארו דעמיסינא
Canary Islands	16,17	פארטום סאנקטום
Canary Islands	1,3,14,15,27,29	פארטונאטי אינסולי
Africa	22	פוטים
Piedmont	7	פוימונטי
Nile River Island	3	פולוסיגו
Poland	2	פולקיא
Portugal	5,7,8,12-18,20,23,25,26,29	פורטוגאל
West Africa	15	פורטו די לשוגו
East Africa	13	פיאטאם
Piombino, Italy	7,12,29	פיומבינא
Yugoslavia	11	פילא
North Africa	1,2,6,8,12,14,15,19,27	פים
Jordan	5	פינים טירא
Black Sea Region	3	פינציאום אכזיהיניאום
Pisa	5,7,12	פיסא

Pesaro	7,11	פיסארו
Parma	11	פירמו
Ferrara	12,25,30	פירארה
Pishon River	30	פישון
Flanders	3,12,15,25,26	פלאנדריים
Florence	15,21,29	פלארענצע
West Africa	23	נהר פלמי
Palestine	2,6,8,10,11,15,20,22,30	פלשתיים
West African Island	17	פפויין
West Africa	13-15	פרומונטוריא
Italy	26	פרונטיני
Provence	5,7,12,26	פרווינצא
Near East	2,8	פריסטיגיאני
Balkans	11	פרינצא
Central Europe	11	פריאול
Persia	2,8,9,24,26,27,30	פרס
Persian Sea	3,8,9,15,24,26,30	ים פרס
Northern India	25	פרעטיגיאני
Perpignan, France	7,12	פרפיניאן
Euphrates River	8-10,30	נהר פרת
Israel	14	ארץ הצבי
Tyre	6,8,11	צור
Sidon	6,8	צידון
Cilicia	9-11	ציליציאע
Central Asia	28	צינבא בקוטארי
Cyprus	2,3,5,11,17	ציפרי
Italy	7	צירויאע



North Sea	7	הים הצפוני
Cyrenaica	22	צרינוס
France	2,7,12,26,30	צרפת
Catalonia	5,7,8	קאטאלוניה
Calabria	5,7,11	קאלאבריא
Red Sea Islands	24	איי קאלאמיטא
Calicut, India	8,12,13,15,23-28	קאליקוט
Canary Islands	13,18,27,29	איי קאנאריא
Candia, Crete	2,11,17	קאנדיע
West Indies	13,18,27	קאניבאלי
West Africa	22,23	נהרי קאטאמאסא
West Africa	15	קאסטיל די לאמינא
Caspian Sea	3,9,30	ים קאספיא
West Africa	23	קאפו אדמוני
West Africa	23	קאפו אלעגרא
Cape Blanco, North Africa	13,15,18-20,27	קאפו ביאנקו
Cape of Good Hope	13-15,27,30	קאפו די בונא ספיראנצא
West Africa	15	קאפו די לאגאלא
West Africa	15	קאפו די לארקאל
West Africa	15,19	קאפו די לוגדאר
West Africa	15	קאפו די לוסק אבלול
West Africa	23	קאפו דע מאנסע
Cape Verga, West Africa	23	קאפו ווערגע
Cape Verdi, West Africa	13-15,19-21,27,29	קאפו ווערדי
West Africa	20	קאפו לבן
Cape Nun, West Africa	15	קאפו נון
West Africa	23	קאפו סאגרעם

West Africa	23	קאפו סאלורום
Cape Cantin, West Africa	13,19,27	קאפו קאנטין
West Africa	23	קאפו קארטים
West Africa	22,23,26	קאפו ראשו
Carthage	5,6	קארטאגינא
Persia	26	קארטונה
Persia	3,9	קארמאניא
West Africa	17	חוף קדוש
Cologne	7	קולוניא
Constantinople	3,7,11	קונסטאנטיןאפלי
Yugoslavia	2,11	קורבאקיא
Cordoba	7	קורדובא
Corsica	2,5,12	קורסיקא
Corfu	5,11	קורפו
Italy	7	קייזא
Kir	24	קירה
Near East	8,14,19,24	הקרובאני
Crete	11	קריטא
Italy	11	ראגוזא
Ravenna	7,11	ראוינע
West Africa	22,23	ראש אדמוני
Cape Verga, West Africa	23	ראש ווערגע
West Africa	15	ראש ירוק
West Africa	15	ראש לבן
Cape Cantin, West Africa	18	ראש קאנטין
West Africa	23	ראש קדוש
West Africa	23	ראש קדוש סאגערעם

West Africa	23	ראש שמח
Cape of Good Hope	15,27	ראש תקוה טובה
Rhone River	7,12	נהר רודאנוס
Rhodes	2,3,5,11	רודי
Rome	3,6,7,14,24-26	רומא
Rumania	7	רומאניאע
Russia	2,11	רוסיא
Reggio di Calabria	7	ריאו
Central Asia	28	ריאו דע ראסא
Reggio di Calabria	12	ריגיאו
Africa	15	ריגיאו אוזאניאע
Africa	15	ריגיעו בארבאריקו
Rimini, Italy	7,11	רימיני
Rhine River	7,30	נהר רינוס
Central Europe	12	שגוויציד
Persia	26	שושיאנע
Persia	9,26,30	שושן הכירה
Cilicia	6	שיליציה
Jordan	2,15	שעיר
Yemen	15	תימן
Mesopotamia	13,30	חלסר
Yugoslavia	11	שפת התקייאביניאע

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