"If a Passage Could Be Found": The Power of Myth (and Money) in North American Exploration

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"If a Passage Could be Found"

The power of myth (and money) in North American exploration

BY BRENDEN RENSINK

The popular lore of North American exploration and westward expansion has oft been woven with themes of heroic bravery, divine providence and Manifest Destiny. These tales indeed relate portions of actual history, but also offer insight into the self-perception and culture of the societies perpetuating them. As larger-than-life figures braved the "unknown" in the name of nation or creed, the motives behind their ventures often were not so singular. The ever-driving force of economic gain stood as a foundation for most expeditions. Simultaneously justifying the current expedition and providing support for future endeavors, explorers interested in self-preservation placed a premium on results—on discovery. The naïve or overly eager optimism of many investors and patrons regularly led to the hasty acceptance of misinformation. In some cases, the intensity of these motives and forces was so strong that different expeditions promising new knowledge or wealth received funding through the centuries in spite of constant disappointment and financial loss. Particularly alluring were the interrelated myths of the Strait of Anian and the Northwest Passage. The promise they offered was more than enough to fuel both imaginative thought and risky endeavors that forever affected North American exploration and its subsequent history.

In and of themselves, the origins and dissemination of these myths provide a strong historical narrative concerning the subsequent impact of "discovery" upon world history. This grand myth of a Northwest Passage generated and sustained numerous explorations as explorers and governments placed surprising trust and faith in unsubstantiated geographical concepts. Clearly driving many of the expeditions that slowly mapped the New World’s coastlines and interior waterways, the long-term impact of cartographic myth cannot be overstated. Likewise, the lure of money, or promise thereof, lent fuel to the imaginative exploits that the myths of the Northwest Passage and Strait of Anian proffered. Dissemination of expedition exploits through popular writing, the willingness of explorers to adapt myths to align with new geographical discovery and the potential for wealth consistently underwrote these myths’ influence in a geopolitical contest that lasted for generations.

Around 1500, European powers vied for political and economic advantages over rival nations. The far off lands of China (Cathay or Cataia), India and the Spice Islands, yet inaccessible to Europe since the Ottoman Empire blocked overland routes, were tempting theatres for economic competition via maritime routes. European powers yearned for access to the riches that lay just beyond their grasp. These dreams and aspirations proved to be fertile ground in which the myth of an easy passage to the Far East could take root and flourish. Unable to ignore potential profit and power, a pattern of accepting promising geographic speculation as fact emerged. Idyllic hopes, desires and conjecture soon became definite realities in reports, discourses, maps, and royal funding and approbation of expeditions. The writings of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Luke Foxe, Anthony Linton, Juan de Fuca, Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado and countless others illustrate the metamorphosis from optimistic hopes to purported fact, and the willingness of European rulers to invest in such ideas. This article explores a small contingent of those who were involved in the creation, perpetuation and adaptation of the Northwest Passage myth.
Creation and Evolution of Theories

The theory of the Strait of Anian exemplifies this metamorphic process. Described by Marco Polo in the late thirteenth century as a body of water southwest of Tibet, it eventually was transformed into the western extremity of the Northwest Passage around the North American continent. Misconceptions of world geography as a whole allowed such a concept to take root. Ideas set forth by the Greek philosopher Ptolemy still held great influence in the minds of European navigators, but they were proven to be incorrect. By miscalculating the length of the earth's latitudinal degrees, the circumference of Ptolemy's globe measured only 270 degrees across from the Prime Meridian. This mistaken idea extended Asia too far east and sheds light on Columbus's much-mocked mistake of believing that he had landed in Asia. The Ptolemy-based globe placed America right where Asia should have been and as late as his fourth voyage in 1503, Columbus still believed himself to be on the Asiatic coasts. (See Figure 1.) Since his sketches connected the northern coast of South America with the southern coast of Southeast Asia, it is arguable that Columbus never realized that he had not reached Asia. Expeditions by Columbus (1492), John Cabot (1497), Jacques Cartier (1534) and others turned European eyes to the Northwest for a passage and Marco Polo's earlier cartographical reports soon became documents of great interest. Soon, the southwest Asian Strait of Anian in Polo's account moved northeast and merged with the Northwest Passage myth, lending the historical (though apocryphal) name, Anian, to a myth without foundation. As long as there remained a tract of uncharted wilderness, the possibility of a passageway persisted.

In 1524, Italian explorer Giovanni Da Verrazano made a landmark voyage that detailed the coasts of future New England in unprecedented detail, which convinced him that Columbus was mistaken. According to Verrazano's new cartography, America and Asia were separate continents. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's 1576 A Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage to Cataia concurred, citing clearly divergent fauna, wildlife and cultures of Asia and America as evidence. He proclaimed, "Al [sic] which learned men and painful travellers have affirmed, with one consent and voice, that America was an Iland [Island]." Despite the inconvenient imposition of an entire continent between Europe and the Far East, men such as Gilbert were undeterred. Given the new obstacle, focus shifted toward the myth of a Northwest Passage. The supposed existence of an oceanic passageway or a large interior river through the Americas made the continental obstacle surmountable. Discovering and controlling the invaluable passage and accessing the Asian markets beyond remained paramount.

The mythical waterway made an early cartographic appearance when Italian mapmaker Bolognino Zaltieri drew America and Asia as two separate continents in 1566 and labeled the dividing waterway as the Strait of Anian. Zaltieri's separation of the continents was correct, but his labeling of the Strait of Anian was pure speculation. Though New World geographic discovery slowly lifted the shroud of previous ignorance, cartographic speculation persisted. Dependent upon the patronage of governments and wealthy investors, explorers and cartographers carefully highlighted...
the need for further exploration, emphasized the certainty of imminent discoveries and downplayed the grave risks inherent in Terra Incognita's great unknown. These men perpetuated the myth to secure future funding and European nations fostered it to further their imperial ambitions. The conditions allowed the myth to engulf the imaginations and pocketbooks of the European powers.

**Methods for Securing Funds**

Those who proclaimed the existence of the Northwest Passage did so in various forms. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's *A Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage to Cataia*, funded by Frobisher's Company of Cathay, is a prime example. Searching to prove the existence of his Northwest Passage by "authoritie [sic] ... by reason ... by experience of sundrie [sic] men's travels ... [and] by circumstance," Gilbert made a strikingly convincing argument. (See Figures 2 and 3.)

He first sought to establish the passage's existence through rhetoric in order to secure funding for an expedition whereby he could actually prove its physical existence. His pleas to Queen Elizabeth for extraordinary privileges and favors in connection with the supposed passage revealed clear monetary motives. Many others mimicked Gilbert's pattern of presenting promising evidence to acquire a patron. Whether the adventure of discovery truly captured them, or baser monetary motives drove them, the dissemination of the myth proved effective.

Even though no expedition found the elusive Northwest Passage, the explorers and their sponsors remained resolute in their continuation of the quest. After his failed 1631 expedition, Luke Foxe gave an unflappably optimistic report in 1635. To contextualize his failure, he shared stories of similar failed ventures of King Arthur, Octher, Frobisher, Davis, Weymouth, Hall, Knight and Hudson. As if their shared belief could will the passage into existence, Foxe emphasized that their common faith in the passage outweighed their failure to find or locate it. Using Gilbert's *Discourse* and other documents as support, Foxe explained that he would not relate the discovery of the passage, but rather, "the way to find one." By recounting and relating other's failed endeavors, he carefully deemphasized the failure of his own expedition by contextualizing himself in the common plight of other explorers. True to pragmatic form, Foxe concluded, "to show the probability of a Passage," and make certain solicitations thereby. Foxe's maneuvering was indeed deft: shrugging blame for failure, emphasizing the knowledge gained amidst failure, and proving through additional evidence that he would produce dividends on future investment. Foxe, like Gilbert, perpetuated myth in hopes of later proving it as fact.

**Purported Discovery of Maritime Routes to the Far East**

After securing funding, the task of mapping courses through the passage stood as the obvious goal. Despite its nonexistence, the passage was charted by many. Accounts arose of men who claimed to have discovered the Northwest Passage or Strait of Anian. In 1596, London-based Michael Lok circulated the account of one Apostolos Valerianos (also known as Juan de Fuca), who purportedly had sailed north from the Pacific Coast of Mexico in 1592 and claimed to have discovered the strait in its entirety. De Fuca reported that he entered a strait to the east between the latitudes of 47 degrees and 48 degrees. He followed this strait for 20 days until exiting into the Atlantic Ocean. Lok apparently found de Fuca's tale convincing, for he made plans to lead an expedition in search of the passage with de Fuca as his guide. De Fuca's claim that the lands on the sides of the strait were "very fruitfull [sic], and rich of gold, Silver, Pearle [sic] and other things, like Nova Spania," certainly make his services as a guide more enticing. De Fuca and Lok spread the apocryphal tale since it suited their needs. Though Lok's publicity may have influenced two voyages in 1602 and 1607, de Fuca's account did not find widespread popularity until reprinted by Samuel Purchas in 1625. Belatedly, de
According to Maldonado’s account, he left from Lisbon and, sailing northwest, reached the Island of Friesland off the Labrador Coast and other familiar landmarks of the northeastern coasts of North America. After passing through the Strait of Labrador, an easily navigable passage extended for 790 leagues until it ended at the Strait of Anian. Maldonado stated that if they had continued farther, they surely would have run into Quivira, Japan, China and India. His account provided detailed directions for the discovery of the passage, a declaration that appeared too good to be true. Seeing through his fabrication, the majority of those who read Maldonado’s account dismissed it as fraudulent. For analytical purposes, Maldonado’s account is highly useful. Viewed in context, his report can be read as a detailed shortlist of the King of Spain’s most desired discoveries: a harbor large enough to anchor 500 ships; adjacent rivers deep enough for the largest ocean-going vessels; ideal town sites in the surrounding environs; lush arboREAL tracts to supply ample lumber; mountains conveniently leveled off and ready for agriculture and abundant animal life. (See Figure 4.) If this overly idyllic description did not sufficiently exacerbate Maldonado’s credibility, his insistence that an immediate return voyage was necessary after having kept his discovery a secret for 20 years did. Stressing that he did not want to lose the passage to a rival nation, his list of provisions needed for his subsequent voyage was both lengthy and costly. His request was dismissed and his career never recovered.

Lastly, Anthony Linton asserted a near discovery in 1609. His discussion of perfecting navigation techniques in Newes of the Complement of the Art of Navigation emphasized the potential commerce with Cathay and he claimed to have located (though not sailed through) a passage to the Near East. Linton wrote, “I might with the safety of my credit, have affirmed that I had fully discovered that passage.” Acknowledging the uncharted remainder of the passage, he continued with optimism, “The residue of that passage yet undiscovered, is lesse [sic] by much then it hath been thought to be.” Drawing on Gilbert’s example, he then concluded by making mention of the great riches that trade with Cathay promised. The fictitious accounts of de Fuca, Maldonado and Linton reveal an anxious mindset among European nations, private investors and explorers. One has to question what

Figure 3. This world map is attributed to James Beare, principal surveyor of the Frobisher expeditions. The Northwest Passage (Frobisher Straits) and Strait of Anian are labeled on the map.

Figure 4. This drawing from Maldonado’s account has labeled the different features of the Strait of Anian and illustrates how unbelievably idyllic his story was. Fuca’s fantastic tale did not immediately meet Lok’s initial goals to generate excitement and unlock Europe’s investment coffers. The attempt, however, is illustrative.

Explorer Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado presented his own account of discovery to the King of Spain in 1609. Perhaps having heard de Fuca’s story, and in an attempt to antedate de Fuca’s voyage, Maldonado claimed to have discovered in 1588 a Northwest Passage through which “a ship may proceed directly from Spain to the Philippines.” According to Maldonado’s account, he left from Lisbon and, sailing northwest, reached the Island of Friesland off the Labrador Coast and other familiar landmarks of the northeastern coasts of North America. After passing through the Strait of Labrador, an easily navigable passage extended for 790 leagues until it ended at the Strait of Anian. Maldonado stated that if they had continued farther, they surely would have run into Quivira, Japan, China and India. His account provided detailed directions for the discovery of the passage, a declaration that appeared too good to be true. Seeing through his fabrication, the majority of those who read Maldonado’s account dismissed it as fraudulent.

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these men would have done if they had received funding and then failed to rediscover the passage they already claimed to have found. They must have planned to face an angry monarch, disappear or succeed in finding the passage, thus obviating the crisis of previous dishonesty.

**River Routes to the Far East**

As the fruitless maritime race to find a Northwest or Northeast Passage to the Far East extended across nearly two full centuries, public interest waned. After countless failed expeditions, the myth of the Northwest Passage would have to undergo adaptation to warrant further use. The common logic was that if deity had placed a continent between Europe and Asia, nature surely would provide a way around or through it. Even though maritime routes had failed to produce the desired easy passage, nations and their explorers were not willing to relinquish their hopes for an eventual breakthrough. Hence, the ever-adaptable myth evolved. Giving up the idea of a way around the continent, explorers began favoring the idea of finding a river system that led through the heart of North America. Unfortunately, they failed to comprehend the immensity of the continent or, more importantly, the height and breadth of an even greater obstacle in their quest to reach Pacific shores—the Rocky Mountains.

One of the first to propose the idea of a river running west to the Pacific was Louis Armand de Lom d’Arce, Baron de Lahontan. During his explorations of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River in 1688, Native Americans hinted of a “Long River,” which extended from the Mississippi to the Pacific and raised immediate interest. While not published until 1703, the news of Lahontan’s findings must have spread quickly for, in that same year, cartographer Guillaume de L’Isle included Lahontan’s Long River on his map of Canada. As the seventeenth century drew to a close, the hoped-for Northwest Passage, once thought to have lain beyond the northern coasts of the continent, was shifted southward to a river system running through the continent. Often, explorers and mapmakers visualized this river running northeast to southwest, thereby connecting the Hudson Bay with the Sea of the West or Lac de Fonte.

The Sea of the West, or *Mer de l’Ouest*, concept led many to believe that the Pacific could be reached easily by extending the Pacific eastward almost halfway across the continent. As early as 1695, Guillaume de L’Isle proffered the concept of this large inland sea. In 1582, Michael Lok had illustrated this same concept as the Sea of Verazana. (See Figure 7.) Similarly, Pierre Mortier’s 1700 map engulfed all of present-day Washington, British Columbia and Montana as an expansive inland sea. (See Figure 8.) Adopting nomenclature from earlier incarnations of Northwest Passage mythology, Mortier labeled a “Destroit de Anian” running northeast out of the Mer de l’Ouest straight and wide until eventually connecting with the Hudson Bay system. De L’Isle and Mortier’s notions served as a transitional point as the passage myth moved from an Arctic maritime route around the continent to a river passage through the
continent. The passage myth and Anian name were adapted to fit new discoveries, realities and hopes.

A severe underestimation of North America’s size compounded the cartographic imaginings of an Atlantic-Pacific river passage. In 1622, Henry Briggs, the eminent mathematician and Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, wrote the following:

The Indian Ocean, ... lyeth on the West and North west side of Virginia, on the other side of the Mountains beyond our Fals, and openeth a free and faire passage, not onely to China, Japan, and the Moluccaes ... [and] may easily from Virginia be discovered ouer Land ... 

As support for his contention that the Pacific easily could be reached overland, he cited Native American testimonies to that effect. Briggs’s and his contemporaries’ utter lack of understanding of the American interior is painfully evident. They wrote in matter-of-fact tones, suggesting a widespread willingness to accept or believe these ideas.

Many, such as Alexander Mackenzie, set out to find this river passage. As reports circulated of a great river flowing northwest out of Slave Lake in central Canada, Mackenzie set out on June 3, 1789, in hopes of following this river to its outlet to the Western Sea. Much to his dismay, the Mackenzie River emptied into the Arctic, not the Pacific Ocean. Undaunted, Mackenzie continued his quest for a river passage to the Pacific and set out again on October 10, 1792, planning to follow the Peace River southwest out of Lake Chipewyan. At the forks of the Peace River on May 31, 1793, Mackenzie followed Indians’ advice and took the northerly branch, which, after a portage, brought him to the Pacific shore on July 22, 1793. Though the portage proved wholly impractical for large-scale commercial traffic, Mackenzie remained optimistic that profitable exploitation of his route “require[d] only the countenance and support of the British Government.”

The publication of Mackenzie’s account in 1801, with its explanation of commercial opportunities in the Pacific Northwest, quickly caught the attention of President Thomas Jefferson. Having previously helped organize John Ledyard’s trip to the Pacific Northwest via Siberia in 1786, Jefferson already was preoccupied with the region. On June 20, 1803, Jefferson wrote to his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, detailing instructions for a new overland expedition to the Pacific. Among other instructions, Jefferson wrote: “The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by it’s course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any
other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce.”36 The concept of the Northwest Passage had once again seized the imagination and pocketbook of a nation, only this time one in the western hemisphere.

Jefferson’s view of the West drew upon the Enlightenment mentality that there was balance in nature, and assumed that the West would be somewhat symmetrical to the East. If the Rockies were a low-lying range similar to the Appalachians of the East, they would not be an insurmountable obstacle for an overland route.37 Jefferson imagined a water route that connected the two coasts of an enormous empire, which would make possible the transportation of trade goods and furs in both directions. (See Figure 9.) Although Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and the Corps of Discovery reached the Pacific Ocean, the Rocky Mountains frustrated Jefferson’s hopes for a navigable Northwest Passage through the continent. The great River of the West, the Columbia, simply did not extend as deeply eastward as had been hoped. Jefferson’s Corps of Discovery succeeded in many of its objectives and collected invaluable information about the American interior, but the Northwest Passage remained an elusive myth.38

Conclusions
This brief survey of explorers, cartographers, writers and magistrates finds the Northwest Passage myth rooted in economic interests. Lucrative trade and possible world dominance stood as the reward for whomever could discover, fortify and control this passage. Some explorers may have knowingly deceived financiers to fund expensive ventures into the unknown, fully knowing that there was virtually no proof of a passage. Evidence also exists that the myth of the passage was created less out of malicious intent than out of naïve optimism and high hopes. While many people were involved in the creation of the Northwest Passage myth, it seems that its genesis lies in a synthesis of these two approaches. Some were consciously deceiving others in hopes of getting rich, while others were simply so optimistic that they claimed more than their geographical knowledge could rightfully support.

After the myth was firmly entrenched in the minds of European power wielders, similar processes took place in its propagation and evolution. Men such as Maldonado, de Fuca, Lok, Linton and others deliberately exaggerated or fabricated stories to earn their wages. If they could receive funding and were able to find the passage, the potential gain outweighed the danger of their initial deception. Though also driven by economic motives, men such as Gilbert and Foxe did not engage in such outright deceit. They were as eager as their potential financiers to prove that the Northwest Passage existed. With such a hopeful attitude, they eagerly accepted and disseminated any promising evidence that they heard. As for those who financed the trips, one explorer’s or cartographer’s guess was as good as another; nobody had a clear understanding of New World geography. Hence, they tended to support reports that confirmed the existence of what they hoped was true—an easily navigable passage to the Far East.

The myth of the Northwest Passage and those who perpetuated its existence shared a marked tenacity and flexibility. Every bay, inlet or river that proved not to be the passage caused supporters of the myth to change their focus to remaining possibilities not yet ruled out. Likewise, every unexplored bay, inlet or river held the possibility of the greatest cartographic discovery of the age.39 The geographic possibilities of an empty Terra Incognita map were endless. Then, the discovered coastlines and river systems slowly filled in empty spaces on maps and reality decisively erased those possibilities. On August 12, 1805, Meriwether Lewis reached Lemhi Pass, hoping to look down upon the headwaters of the mighty Columbia just a short distance away.40 Of his westward view he wrote, “...we proceeded on to the top of the dividing ridge from which I discovered immense ranges of high mountains still to the West of us with their tops partially covered with snow.”41 The Rocky Mountains were a greater obstacle than anyone had imagined, and whether Lewis realized it or not, the
American imaginations throughout those many years. It was the inspiration that drove the Age of Exploration and proved adaptable, flexible and tenacious enough to hold the interest of nations despite countless failed expeditions. One British dignitary wrote in 1737, “If a Passage could be found into the South Sea, it would open ... a very profitable Commerce.” Such belief provided ample fuel to spur imaginations, override logic and foster naïve optimism for centuries. The attentions and treasuries of nations were spent on an enigma that proved to be eternally elusive. Ironically, the melting sea ice associated with global climate change has spurred a new feverish dash to secure Arctic sea routes. Modern icebreaking vessels have traversed the northern route in recent years, but some observers suspect that rising temperatures may open the passage permanently to a full range of commercial traffic. Though centuries delayed, the promise of an easy passage to the Far East may at last become a reality.

Brenden Rensink is a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln studying Native American immigrants and refugees along the U.S.-Mexican and U.S.-Canadian borders. He has published on comparative Native American borderlands, comparative genocide studies and U.S. territorial legal history.

NOTES
2 For a more complete listing of individuals, see the sidebar on p. 16. This is a listing of explorers, cartographers and writers whose influence, by expedition, maps and publications, perpetuated the myth of an easy passage to the Far East. While the list is not comprehensive, the small sampling illustrates the enormous pull of this myth. Also, the list shows how enduring the myth was as it succeeded in generating expeditions for more than 300 years.
A Brief Chronology of the Search for a Passage to the Far East:

Explorers, cartographers and writers who made expeditions in search of a passage produced maps that had lasting influence or otherwise perpetuated the myths of the Northwest or Northeast Passages.

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<td>George Back</td>
<td>1833, 1836</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>James Knight</td>
<td>1719</td>
<td>Sir Robert McClure</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtus Bering</td>
<td>1728, 1733-1743</td>
<td>Isaac Hayes</td>
<td>1860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Dobbs</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>Henry Kellett</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph la France</td>
<td>1739, 1742</td>
<td>Allen Young</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Middleton</td>
<td>1741-1742</td>
<td>Nils A.E. Nordsenskjold</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francois and Louis Joseph</td>
<td>1743</td>
<td>Roald Amundsen</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates cartographers and writers, rather than exploring expeditions.

5 Among those who, at one time, also believed that America was simply a peninsula off the greater Asian continent were Magellan, Las Casas, Behaim, Martellus and Balboa. During Coronado’s 1540 expedition in search of Cibola, the group’s chronicler Casteñeda expressed similar views. He stated, “And this land of New Spain is part of the mainland with Peru, and with Greater India or China as well.” In talking of natives, Casteñeda referred to them quite literally as Indians because he believed they “must [have] come from that part of Greater India.” See Pedro Casteñeda, *The Journey of Coronado* (New York: Readex Microprint, 1966), pp. 83, 108 and 134.

6 The voyages of John Cabot in 1497 and Jacques Cartier in 1534 were particularly influential in raising hopes that a passage to the Far East existed in the northwest of the American continent. Of Cartier’s voyage, Sir Humphrey Gilbert cited a mariner having heard of a great sea to which there was no end. They presumed this to be a passage to Cathay. See Richard, “The Strait of Anian,” pp. 164-165. By Rasmusio’s popular 1559 edition of Polo’s voyages, European cartographers had inexplicably moved the Anian waters northeast of India. The misinterpretation included the confounding of the Quian and Oman rivers and other geographical features that remained
somewhat ambiguous in Polo’s account. Relying solely upon Marco Polo’s account, Giacomo Gastaldi fully merged Anian with the Northwest Passage myth. See Nunn, *Origin of the Strait of Anian*, pp. 22-25.


12Ibid, Vol 1, pp. 105-106 and 160. Some of the favors he requested were to receive 1/5th of all customs paid on goods brought through the passage for the next 99 years, to pay no customs himself, to receive 1/10th of all lands discovered by means of his passage and to be named governor of said lands.


14Ibid., Vol 1, p. 6.

15Ibid., Vol 2, p. 443. Some apparently thought that the voyages’ results were not worth the time and money spent on them.


18Later explorers named the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which leads from the Pacific Ocean into the Puget Sound, between the Olympic Peninsula of present-day Washington and Vancouver Island, after Juan de Fuca. Perhaps de Fuca had passed or briefly entered this large strait, thought it was a likely candidate for the fabled Strait of Anian, and fabricated the account of having followed it through to the Atlantic Ocean.

19Wagner, “Apocryphal Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America,” p. 185.

20Taken from “A Note made by me Michael Lok ...” as cited in Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, or *Purchas his Pilgrimes: Containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, 20 volumes, (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905), Vol. 3, p. 849.


24Sent to verify the veracity of Maldonado’s account, Malaspina sailed north in 1789. Although he did not find the Strait of Anian, he asserted that the Northwest Passage must exist elsewhere. See Alessandro Malaspina, *The Malaspina Expedition, 1789-1794: Journal of the Voyage by Alejandro Malaspina* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2001).

25Wagner, “Apocryphal Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America,” p. 183.


27Ibid., p. 22.


29Wagner, “Apocryphal Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America,” p. 208.


34Ibid., p. 186.

35Ibid., p. 408.


38If the Salmon or Snake rivers were navigable, a water route might have been possible with only one short portage.


40The idea that these two great river systems would have their headwaters near one other was a popular belief. See John L. Allen, “Geographical Images of the American Northwest, 1673-1806” (Doctoral Dissertation, Clark University, 1969), p. 401.
