

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> THE POLO FAMILY HOUSE and with the probabilities of the case, and not irreconcilable with any known fact, while RAMUSIO is inconsistent with himself and his story intrinsically improbable if not impossible. We may then think that Marco was taken prisoner at some obscure and otherwise unrecorded engagement of armed merchantmen in 1296, and that RAMUSIO was mistaken in identifying this battle with the famous battle of Curzola in 1298.<sup>1</sup>

### III. THE MANSION OF THE POLO FAMILY

To Professor ORLANDINI again we owe all our more exact knowledge of the great Polo mansion or Cà Polo in the district of San Giovanni Grisostomo. CICOGNA must have seen the interesting plans of the house which are here reproduced, (plates 16, 17) but no notice seems to have been taken of them till one was published by ORLANDINI in 1913,<sup>2</sup> and even then they remained quite unknown in this country. Above the foundations, which have not been explored, nothing now certainly remains except the tower with the famous Byzantine arches and perhaps parts of the other buildings which overlook the Corte Sabbionera, and it is not at all certain that any of these formed part of the Polo property.<sup>3</sup>

The surviving plans of the ground and second floors are attached to a deed or conveyance of that portion of the property which belonged to Almerigo and Marin Balbi and to Steffano Vecchia when it was sold by them to Giustin Donà in July 1677. The site was sold for the express purpose of building a theatre, and the plans show part of the site of the present theatre. It will be seen that the deed (d.98) describes the site as bounded by two streams and a public street and as being "commonly called Camilion, partly vacant and partly with some few buildings made there for the most part of planks, covered with tiles". The ground plan shows the actual theatre site occupied by a courtyard surrounded with

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<sup>1</sup> B. *Marco Polo*, 1932, p. xiii. A small conjectural corroboration of the earlier and longer imprisonment may be found in the fact that Marco seems to have had no direct share in the purchase of the house in S. Giovanni Grisostomo; but till we know the date of the purchase, this will not count for much.

<sup>2</sup> *Origine del Teatro Malibran*, pp. 5-21, one plan, Venice, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> It seems in fact to be known that the tower with its arches was not part of the Polo house. Cav. Antonio SALVADORI writes of the Corte Sabionera (now Corte seconda del Milion), "This court was included in the precincts of the ancient fortified palace of the Morosini, and was entered by the gate surmounted by a tower which is still admired to day" See C. ZANGIROLAMI, *Indicatore anagrafico di Venezia*, 1931, p. 94. cf. G. LORENZETTI *Venezia*, 1926, p. 344. In 1514 property of Vincenzo MOROSINI seems to have been on the N.-E. side of the Corte Sabionera (Arch. di Stato. *Esam. Invest.* 12 fol. 41, 159, 161.). See pl. 18, 19.