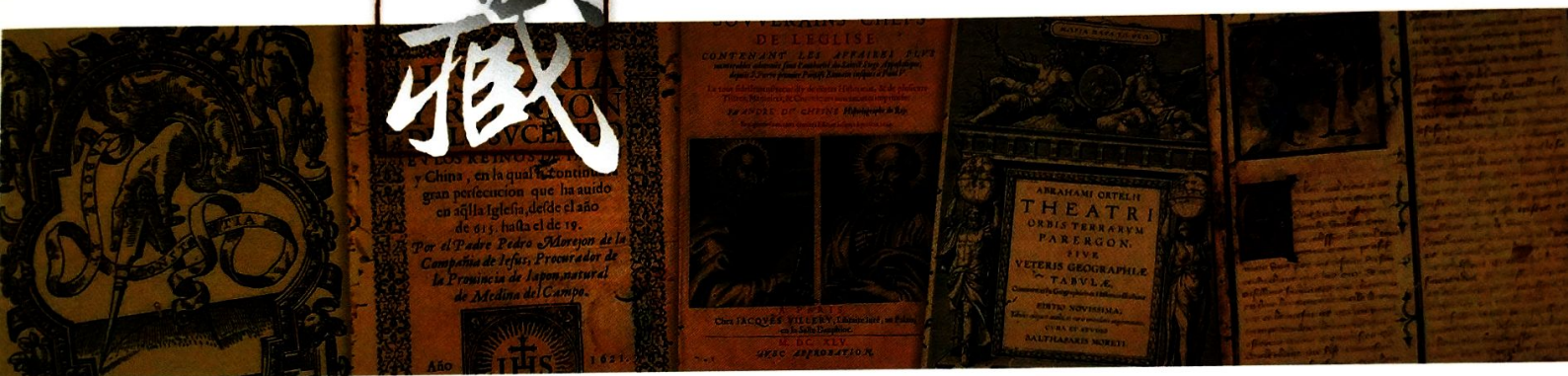


臺灣大學特藏文庫目錄 1

國立臺灣大學圖書館

# 館大鳥文庫目錄

Catalog of the Otori Collection at  
National Taiwan University Library



## One French Manuscript and Two Incunabula from the Otori Collection

Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry (14th century), *The Book of the Knight of La  
Tour-Landry*, 14th- or 15th-century manuscript

bound with

Aesop (6th century B.C.), *Aesop's Fables* (Otori 299)

Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.), *Caii Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae*, Treviso,  
1479 (Otori 606)

Saint Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I) (540-604 A.D.), *Dialogorum Libri  
Quattuor*, Venice, 1492 (Otori 326)

José Eugenio Borao (鮑曉鷗)

Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature  
National Taiwan University

The National Taiwan University Library is proud to have the legacy of the Otori collection, which includes among many other excellent books a rare French manuscript from the 14th or 15th century and two incunabula, a term that refers to books printed before 1500. These books belong to the infancy of European printing, and are typeset and printed by hand from moveable type. If we include five other volumes in Tanaka collection and Philosophy collection, the library owns a total of seven incunabula. The French manuscript includes two educational books copied at the same time, *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* by a French knight to instruct his daughters, and the well-known *Fables* of Aesop, a Greek writer from the 6th century B.C. whose life is surrounded by legend.

The two incunabula are two printed books by Roman authors, first the *Caii Plynii Secundi Naturalis Historiae* of Pliny the Elder, a scientist who lived in the first century A.D., and the *Dialogorum Libri Quattuor* of Gregory the Great, a Roman magistrate who lived in Italy in the 6th century during the Longobard occupation, and who later became a monk and was elected as Pope Gregory I. The following is a short description of these three books.

José Eugenio Borao

1 July 2006

**La Tour-Landry, Geoffroy de** (14th century)

***The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*** (14th or 15th century)

## **AUTHOR**

The author of this book, Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, was the head of a noble family in the province of Anjou, near Brittany. Like his father, he was a knight who distinguished himself in the war against the English in 1336, and he sometimes appears in old French records. As a young man he participated at the siege of Aguillon in 1346; a few years later he married Jeanne de Rouge, and his name also appears in a military muster in 1363. When his two sons were adolescents, he wrote a book for their education but is not preserved. In 1371-1372, he compiled the present book for his daughters and it proved to be more successful. In 1378, he sent soldiers to the siege of Cherbourg, and later appeared in active military service in 1380 and 1383. After the death of his wife, he remarried around 1389, and died probably at the end of the 14th century.

## **TITLE**

Properly speaking the book does not have a title, and it is commonly known as *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*. Modern scholars not familiar with the French language but interested in studying the NTU copy can consult an English edition published of 1906 (London: Kegan Paul) that can be easily found on the Internet. It is an edition of the first English translation printed by Caxton in 1484, under the title of *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry Compiled for the Instruction of His Daughters, Translated from the Original French into English in the Reign of Henry VI*. The edition was prepared by Thomas Wright in 1867 and is preceded by an interesting introduction. Nevertheless, this copy only has 144 chapters, while the NTU copy has three more chapters at the end.

## **CONTENT**

The book contains a series of considerations for the instruction of his

daughters explained through stories not only from the Bible or lives of the saints, but also from fabliaux and other popular tales. He also tried to make it a treatise on the domestic education of women. The manuscript has a list of chapters only at the beginning. Here are some sample chapter titles:

- Chapter 1 : A mirror of the reading of these stories
- Chapter 4 : The knight that followed the gentlewoman into the bush
- Chapter 7 : How maidens and women should fast
- Chapter 10 : How women should behave courteously and meekly
- Chapter 12 : The story of the King of Denmark's daughter
- Chapter 17 : An example of how it is evil for a woman to be jealous
- Chapter 25 : On ladies who go to jousts and pilgrimages
- Chapter 34 : On a lady who had a worldly heart
- Chapter 53 : A lady who was punished for painting herself
- Chapter 58 : On Pharaoh's wife and Joseph the son of Jacob
- Chapter 63 : On proud women
- Chapter 72 : On a woman who would not obey her husband
- Chapter 80 : How no one ought to reprove others for their mistakes
- Chapter 94 : On the evils of flatterers
- Chapter 104 : On charity and forgiveness
- Chapter 109 : On the Virgin Mary
- Chapter 118 : How ladies lose respect and honor by careless living
- Chapter 120 : How a knight's daughter lost her marriage through vanity
- Chapter 125 : How the knight answered his wife

Beside the contents we can also appreciate a magnificent illumination on the first page of the book, which shows Geoffroy addressing his two daughters in an instructional setting. In other copies such illuminations often included three daughters. The illustration has lost part of its original brightness but still shows us an old Geoffroy with a white beard and a small hat, dressed in a fine blue tunic, seated and calm but moving his hands persuasively like a master teaching his lessons. In front of him stand his daughters, listening not blindly but in a receptive mood. They have feminine movements and graceful figures but we



cannot see their faces. They are learning not only moral and social behavior but also the art of dialectics and the use of reasoning. They are dressed modestly in sepia and blue, the two predominant colors of the whole illustration. The scene unfolds in a garden or in landscape with two trees and a golden sky featured in calligraphic strokes.

## MANUSCRIPT

The original book was compiled in 1371, and since then it was copied several times. According to Wright, the editor of the modern English edition, "nearly a dozen copies of the original text are known to exist in manuscript, of which seven are in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and one in the British Museum. One or two of them date at least as far back as to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and two are adorned with illuminations." Therefore, the NTU copy must be related to this group of early copies, prior to the beginning of the printed versions. After this the book was disseminated widely, the first printed edition appearing in English in 1484. Later a German edition was made, in 1493, with a great number of engravings on wood. The king's printer, Guillaume Eustache, made the first French edition in 1514.

The person that ordered this book also ordered a second children's educational book, Aesop's *Fables*, which is bound with the French manuscript. It seems that both books were written at the same time because they have the same calligraphy, which is especially evident in the initial letters. In this case we can consider the whole book as a single manuscript.

Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.)

*Caii Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae* (Treviso, 1479)

## AUTHOR

Pliny the Elder was an ancient scientist whose curiosity caused his death by suffocation while he was observing the eruption of the Mt. Vesuvius, a disaster that covered the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. He wrote many books but only his *Caii Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae* has reached us.

## CONTENT

The *Caii Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae* presents in 37 books all the main scientific knowledge of antiquity, including history, geography, cosmology, medicine, mineralogy, animal and vegetal physiology, art, etc. The two first volumes begin with physics and astronomy. Books 3 to 6 are a compendium of geography and ethnology; from book 6 to book 19 he develops a natural history, including the human, animal, and vegetal realms. From books 20 to 32 Pliny discusses different medicines. And finally in books 33 to 37 there is a study of mineralogy and its application to medicine and the fine arts, including many details about the history of art.

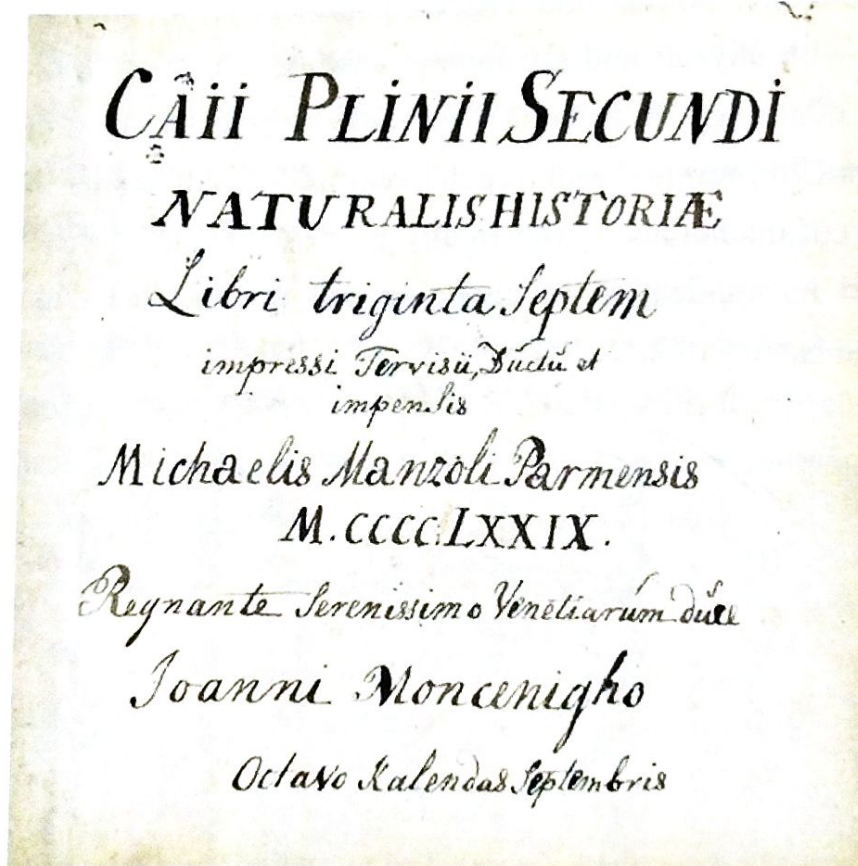


## EDITION

Michaelis Manzoli Parmensis made this superb edition in 1479, but the exact date is not clear. At the end of page iii(v) there is a panegyric praising the author, Pliny the Elder, dated on "tertio idus octobres", which properly speaking should be "ante diem tertio idus octobres", and it corresponds to modern October 13th.

TARVISII TERTIO IDVS  
OCTOBRES MCCCCLXXIX.

Nevertheless, in the first page of the book, there is a handwritten note saying that it was printed on "octavo kalendas september", which stands for August 25th.



This raises the question whether both dates are the same or not. To solve the question I have consulted Prof. Javier Ramón Rodríguez Rodríguez, the representative of the organization Nova Roma Hispania. His answer is that it

might be possible according to the following rationale.

First, that the book was published one century before the calendar reformation made by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, and consequently still keeps the date according to the previous one, the Julian calendar. This calendar was created in the year 45 B.C. and it was valid in many countries in Europe until the end of the 16th Century. Later, somebody decided to put a detailed manuscript cover in the first empty page, and at the same time, to actualize the date of printing according to the new way of counting in the Gregorian calendar. We think that is logical to consider that the note was made after the Gregorian reformation, but in fact, we don't have any clear evidence.

Second, the difference between the date of the Julian and Gregorian calendars in the moment of their application was of 10 days<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, when the reformation was implemented, the day October 4th 1582 was followed by October 15th 1582. But if we compare the printed day "tertio idus octobres" (October 13th) with the updated day of the manuscript cover "octavo kalendas September" (August 25th) there is a difference of 49 days, not of 10. The most clear explanation for this big difference leads to Prof. Rodriguez to suppose that the person making the annotation in the first page made a mistake, writing "octavo kalendas september" (August 25), instead of "octavo kalendas november" (October 25), so referring to the previous month instead of the following one. In this way, the problem of 10 days of difference between both calendars seems to be solved: October 13 (Julian Calendar) and October 25 (Gregorian Calendar); but it is not yet, because the difference now is 11 days, not 10.

How to conceal the discrepancy of one day now? According again to Prof.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Julian calendar was organized adding one day every four years (in the so-called leap year). But a year of 365.25 days is in fact a little bit longer than the real one, resulting in that—after centuries—the civil year was advanced with respect to the astronomical one and the agricultural season. In the 15th century, the discrepancy was of 10 days already. In 1582, the Pope, with the cooperation of the Christian princes, decided to synchronize again both calendars removing the 10 extra days, and creating the new Gregorian calendar. August was chosen because it was the one with more religious festivities and it will disturb less the civil life.

Rodriguez, there are only two possible hypotheses. The simple one is to consider that the correction was made between years 1700 and 2000, when the discrepancy of both calendars passed to be of 11 days<sup>2</sup>. But if the annotation was made between 1582 and 1700 the clearest scenario is to presume another mistake of the annotator. As we have said during this period of 118 years the discrepancy was of 10 days, but it was easy to make the mistake of 11 days because from October 4th to October 15th it looks that there are 11 days of difference (but this is not the case because the days comprised between these two extremes are only 10).

On the other hand, the book was printed in Tarvisii. We don't know exactly if this city is modern Treviso (in the Veneto) or Tarvisio (in the vertex between Italy, Austria and Slovenia). Both cities are near Venice, but, although the word naming the modest city Tarvisio looks closer to Tarvisii, probably Tarvisii refers here to Treviso because this city had a bishop and a university since many centuries ago. For the person making the handwritten cover also it was clear that the city belonged to Venetia, and he added that was published in the moment in which Giovanni Moncenigo was the Dux of Venice (REGNANTE SERENISSIMO VENETIARUM DUX JOANNI MONCENIGHO). It is worth to mention that Spain, Portugal and the states of Italy (where Venice was included) were among the countries that adopted immediately the Gregorian calendar.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Gregorian reformation in fact has an inaccuracy of three extra days within every 400 years. To solve this problem they decided to eliminate the "leap year" day in all the centennial years, with the exception of the years 1600, 2000, 2400, etc. Both calendars continued making the same lap years (keeping still the ten days of difference) until 28 February 1700. That year was lap year in the Julian calendar, but not in the Gregorian, so the difference passed to be of 11 days. In 1800 it was of 12 days and in 1900 13 days. In 2000 did not reach the difference of 14 days because the Gregorian calendar was lap year (as we have said before). This discrepancy of 14 days will happen in year 2100.

## **Saint Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I) (540-604 A.D.)**

*Dialogorum Libri Quattuor* (Venice, 1492)

### **AUTHOR**

Saint Gregory the Great was a Roman magistrate during the difficult years of the Lombard period in Italy, and after some years he became a monk. In 577 Pope Pelagius II appointed him a cardinal and the next year he was sent on a difficult diplomatic mission to Constantinople. He returned to his monastery and was elected abbot. When he was planning to go to England the people forced the pope to keep him in Rome, and when the pope died in 590, he was elected Pope Gregory I. Since then he wrote many books, the *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* in 591, the *Dialogorum Libri Quattuor*, probably finished in 594. He also compiled many of the homilies that he preached. He is popularly known because he introduced the so-called Gregorian chant into the liturgy of the Church.

The author appears in a beautiful engraving, portrayed as a pope through the use of two papal attributes, the expression "Tu es Petrus" (You are Peter) and the keys of the Church binding heaven and earth.

### **CONTENT**

The four books of *Dialogorum Libri Quattuor* are addressed to common people and are written without special literary pretension. Written in a dialogic style, his friend, the deacon Peter, asks Gregory questions that are answered in different ways. In the first book he uses the example of the lives of the saints and other stories mixed with legends and contemporary events. In the second book he narrates the biography of Saint Benedict, probably based on the accounts of fugitive monks that escaped from the monastery of Montecassino, burnt by the Lombards. In the third book he explains other lives of saints. The fourth book is a series of miraculous visions with the aim of probing the immortality of the soul. The book had great impact on medieval concepts of religiosity, for example some authors have related the visions presented in the fourth book to



Sicut Petrus apostolorum princeps in ecclesia dei pre-  
fuit: sic postmodum Gregorius: Qui quidem pro mercede  
glorie celestis inmarcescibilem coronam reportantes: nobis  
scripta bene viuendi crepla reliquerunt: ut infra Gregorii  
sermo dyalogus probat.

## EDITION

From the very beginning, this book was quite popular. Pope Zachary (741-752) translated the *Dialogorum Libri Quattuor* into Greek. It was translated in the Middle Ages to Anglo-Saxon by the bishop of Worcester, and to old French, Italian, and Arabic. The NTU edition was printed in Latin in Venice, by Jeronymum de Paganinis in 1492.

Beatissimi Gregorij summi pontificis opus  
Dialogū: certa q̄daz ⁊ mirāda miracula: a dñō  
deō nostro ad preces sanctorum facta: necnō ⁊  
multa presentis ⁊ future vite exempla perlucide  
tractans: que tanto nos ad bene beateq; viuen-  
dum inuitāt: quāto ipsum autorem felici beati-  
tudine p̄frui cernimus: feliciter clauditur. Cle-  
netijs p̄ Hieronymum de paganinis brixiensem  
Anno incarnationis dñice Millesimo quadrin-  
gentesimo nonagesimosecūdo: Idib⁹ nouēbris.

Registrum prescripti operis.

A b c d e f g h i l Omnes sunt q̄terni  
preter A ⁊ l qui sunt ouerni.