

The Bodleian Library manuscript of the Milione MS. Bodl. 264

Introduction



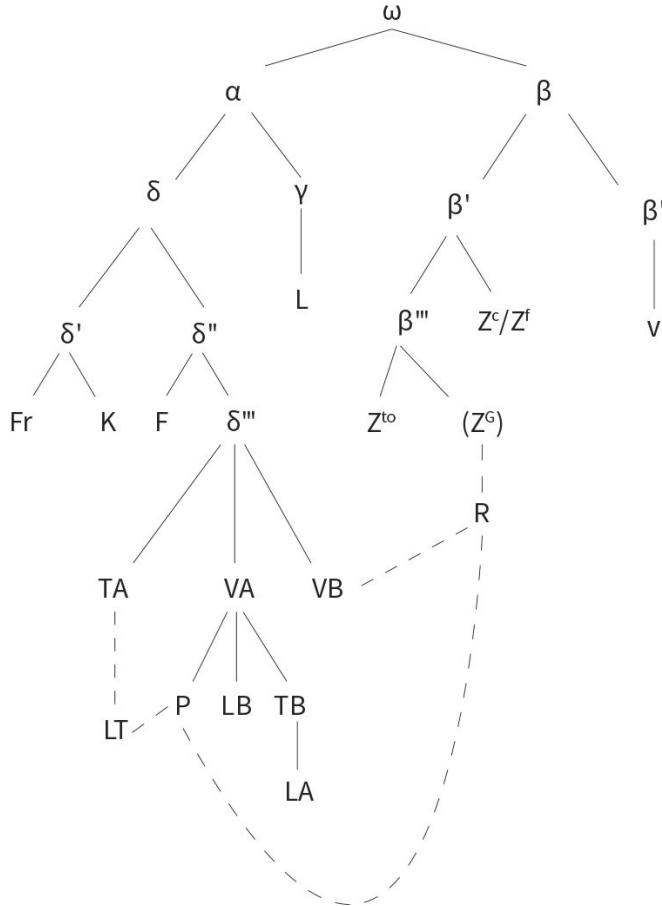
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[ve]dph

Venice Centre for
Digital and Public
Humanities

- Several remakes and translation in different European languages (up to 145 mss and 13 languages)
- Various audiences > various redactions responding to different interests
- Only one codex retains the original French-Italian language (F)



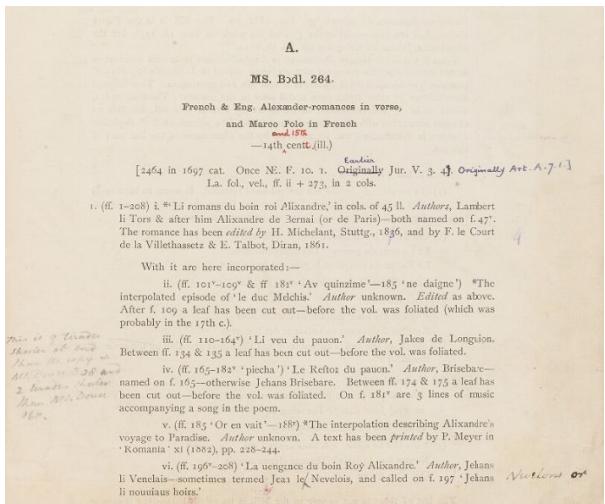
[2017]



French context:

- Aristocracy
- Interest for the marvellous
- Richly illuminated manuscripts

Manuscript Bodley 264 - Bodleian Library, University of Oxford



Catalogue notes

Date: 1338 - 1410

Contents: *Romance of Alexander* (ff. 3-208 / date: 1338-1344);

Alexander and Dindimus (ff. 209-215 / date: 1390-1410);

Marco Polo, *Li Livres du Graunt Caam* (ff. 218-271 / date: 1390-1410)

Material: parchment

3. (ff. 218-271^v) *ⁱⁱ *Li liures du graunt Caam*, in cols. of 46 ll. Author, Marco Polo. The French remodeled text which this MS. represents has been edited by G. Pauthier, Par., 1865, but without the aid of this MS.

The MS. is of the same type as Pauthier's C (see Sir H. Yule's tr. of Marco Polo, i. pp. 89, 92), with which it omits ch. 194, 195, and ends at 196 (numbered 194).

It was written ~~about the end of the 13th c.~~ apparently by the scribe of the second part of this vol.

It has 38 choice miniatures (see list in Yule, ii. 520), by a French hand. The first and largest (f. 218), representing the Piazzetta at Venice and the embarkation of the travelers, has been copied (in greatly reduced size from a photograph) in Mrs. Oliphant's 'Makers of Venice' (Lond., 1887), p. 134. In a miniature (on f. 220) the Great Khan's robe has 5 rows of gold letters; the last of which reads 'iohannes me fecit+'.

(one of the first 6)



Marco Polo, *Li Livres du Graunt Caam*

Illumination of the city of Venice

Illustrator: Johannes
("Johannes me fecit" f. 220r)

Recognisable buildings:
St. Mark's basilica;
St. Mark's Square (with
statues of St. Teodoro and the
lion of St. Mark);
Doge's Palace.



Name of the illustrator on the border of the blue cloak of the Khan (f.220r).



Decorated initial letters
(f.218r).

Marco Polo, *Li livres du Graunt Caam*

MS. Bodl. 264, [fol. 218r](#) and [fol. 218v](#)

Ci commence li livres du graunt Caam qui parole de la graunt Ermenie de Persse. et des Tartars et d'Ynde. Et des granz merveille qui p(ar) le monde sont.

POur sauoir la pure verité des diuerses regions du monde. Si prenez cest livre si trouverez les grandesimes merueilles qui so(n)t escriptes en la Grant Hermenie et de Persse. Et des Tartars. (et) d'Ynde et de maintes autres provinces. Si comme n(ost)re livres vous contera tout par ordre des que mesires Marc Pol sajes et nobles citoie(n)s de Venice raconte pour ce que il les vit.

Here begins the book of the Great Khan, which talks about the great Armenia, Persia, the Tartars and India, and the great wonders that exist in the world.

To know the pure truth about the different regions of the world take this book, and you will find the great wonders that are written on Greater Armenia and Persia and the Tartars and on India and on many other provinces, as Sir Marco Polo, wise and noble citizen of Venice, will tell you in order because he saw them.