

**Visit of the Roxburghe Club to The John Rylands Library, 16 July 2013.  
Roxburghe Club Items**

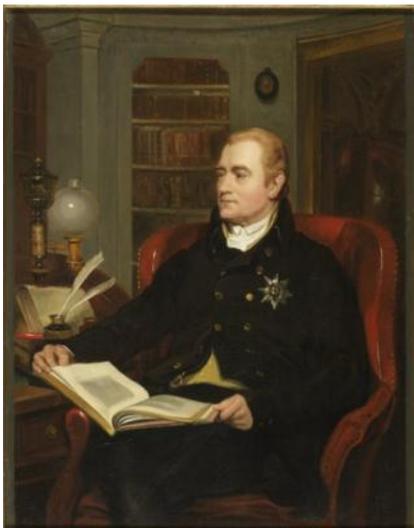
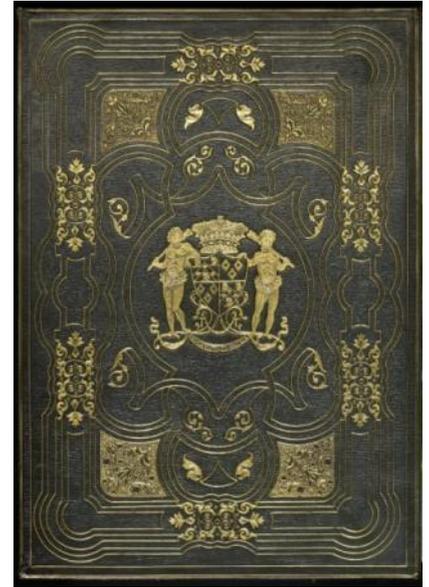
**Giovanni Boccaccio.**

**Decamerone**

**[Venice], Christoph Valdarfer, 1471.**

The Roxburghe sale is famous in the annals of book collecting, for the Duke's copy (then thought to be the only surviving complete copy) of the 1471 Christoph Valdarfer edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron* fetched an astonishing sum. George Spencer, Marquess of Blandford (later the 5th Duke of Marlborough) paid £2,260 for it, against fierce competition from his cousin and fellow bibliomaniac, George John, 2nd Earl Spencer. This was a record price for a single book that was not exceeded until Bernard Quaritch paid £4,950 for the 1459 Mainz Psalter at the Syston Park sale in 1884.

Lord Spencer would have the last laugh though. When financial difficulties forced Marlborough to sell his library seven years later, Spencer snapped up the Valdarfer Boccaccio for only £918. The volume passed to Enriqueta Rylands when she purchased the Spencer Collection from the 2nd Earl's grandson in 1892.



**The three first books of Ovid De Tristibus  
London, From the Shakespeare Press, by W. Bulmer  
and Co, 1816**

This is Spencer's own copy of the book he presented to the Club in 1816, hand illuminated and printed on vellum. The Library has a complete set of all publications, as well as a number of miscellaneous volumes of bills and notes relating to the Roxburghe Club.

### Letters of George John, 2nd Earl Spencer, to Thomas Frognall Dibdin, 1802–32



When Enriqueta Rylands purchased the Spencer Collection in 1892, she also obtained a small number of manuscripts and archival items. This volume contains 174 letters from Spencer to Thomas Frognall Dibdin. They are arranged chronologically and the bulk dates from 1802–16, while the final two letters are dated 1827 and 1832.

The correspondence charts the developing relationship between the two bibliophiles and includes information on Dibdin's works, especially the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, information on general bibliographic events such as auctions and publications, as well as specific information on individual booksellers, buyers and printers. Some family and personal information is also provided at times. The letters have been annotated in pencil by Dibdin.

On 20 June 1813 Spencer wrote to Dibdin:

Your Narrative of the Termination of the Roxburgh dinner made me laugh most heartily; judging from Dent's conversation while he was still sober, it must have been highly comical when he became drunk, & though I confess I should have been unwilling to pay the Price of sitting up till four o'clock to hear it, I should not have disliked partaking of the merriment it must have occasioned; Lord Gower will perhaps have told you if you have happened to see him, of his talking to me of the rare Copy of Cicero's Oratorios! which I bought at Sir W. [William] Pulteney's Sale.

I applaud much the fundamental Laws of the Roxburgh Club, & am highly flattered by the perpetual Presidency. Pray when you have leisure send me a full List of the 31 Members, as I am not sure that I know all the original ones.

### Volume of Roxburghe Club Printed Ephemera and Correspondence, 1814–40

As well as a complete set of the publications of the Roxburghe Club, the Library holds a number of items of ephemera. This folio volume, once belonging to Rev. Henry Drury (29<sup>th</sup> member, 1813–41), contains over sixty printed notices of Club dinners and other meetings, an occasional menu and broadside, as well as seventy manuscript letters to Drury from, amongst others, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Clive, Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Sir Francis and Sir George Henry Freeling, Rev. Edward Craven Hawtrey, Richard Heber, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Spencer, Edward Vernon Utterson, and Archdeacon Wrangham, 1803–40.

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Printed Books

**Baldassare Castiglione.**

**Il Libro del Cortegiano. Ne nuouamente stampato et con somma diligenza reuisto.**

**In Vinegia, In casa de' figliuoli di Aldo 1541.**



The third Aldine edition of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (The Book of the Courtier), the prototype of the “courtesy book” and the classic picture of the ideal renaissance courtier, prince, and enlightened ruler.

This copy is from the library of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton (1540-1614), with his calligraphic signature in lower and outer margins of title, accompanied by a variety of mottoes and quotations in Greek, Latin, and Italian, and with over two hundred marginal annotations throughout the text in his hand. In his 1995 study *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano*, pages 79-80, Peter Burke discusses this copy in detail as a prime example of the influence of the book on the aristocracy in Renaissance England, describing the marginalia as “the fullest and most systematic annotations on Castiglione known to me.” Most of the notes are in Italian, but some are in Latin (quotations from Cicero, etc.).

After his death, Henry Howard's library was purchased by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and the books were part of the sixth Duke of Norfolk's gift (at the diarist John Evelyn's instigation) to the Royal Society in 1667. The bulk of these books were subsequently sold by the Royal Society in 1873 to Bernard Quaritch. More recently the book was owned by the Oxford physician and bibliophile Bent Juel-Jensen (1922-2007). It was purchased by the John Rylands Library at the sale of Aldine imprints & early printed books from the library of Kenneth Rapoport, on at Swann Auction Galleries of New York on Tuesday October 23, 2012. The acquisition was generously supported by the Friends of the National Libraries.

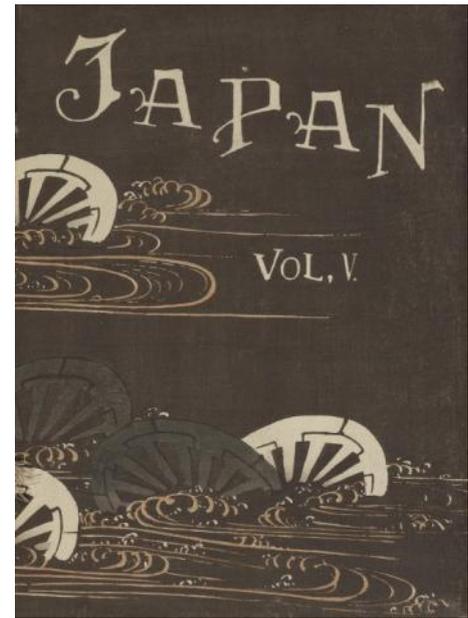
The Library holds an outstanding collection of editions of *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, including all the early editions published by the Aldine press and the 1588 trilingual edition (Italian, French and English) printed in London by John Wolfe.

**Japan: described and illustrated by the Japanese,**  
**edited by Captain F. Brinkley.**

**Boston : J. B. Millet Company 1897.**

In the 1890s, the J. B. Millet Company of Boston embarked upon an extraordinary venture: a complete pictorial record of the country, entitled *Japan, Described and Illustrated by the Japanese*.

*Japan* is one of the most opulent photographic books ever produced. Over 250 hand-coloured photographs show buildings and landscapes – Mount Fuji seen from Kashiwabara, cherry blossoms at Koganei, temples, bamboo groves, rice fields and bridges – as well as Japan's inhabitants, including street vendors, calligraphers, lantern-makers, farmers, schoolchildren, geishas and Buddhist monks. There is even a picture of an actor representing a samurai warrior. For curious Westerners, who were already captivated by Japan's art, turning these pages was the next best thing to visiting this mysterious and fascinating country. Japan was often referred to as a 'sealed book': now, for the first time, the book was being opened.



The creation of these volumes was painstaking and astonishingly labour-intensive. The original photographs, all taken in Japan, were individually printed, washed, fixed, toned, dried, cropped, hand-coloured and pasted onto the page – a process that was repeated thousands of times across the sixteen editions of the book. The photographs were albumen prints created using silver salts suspended in egg white, a more time-consuming process than the gelatine and collodion method that had recently been introduced.

The most distinctive feature of *Japan* was the hand-colouring of the photographs. This technique had largely been replaced by mechanical colouring, and was already seen as more traditional and prestigious. The Japanese excelled in the hand-colouring of decorative objects such as fans, lanterns and prints, and by the 1880s they were applying this expertise to colouring photographs. It is estimated that a total of 350 individual colourists would have worked for a year on their own part of the work, with each colourist completing, at most, three prints a day.

The work also featured ten full-page collotypes of Japanese flowers by the renowned photographer Ogawa Kazumasa, a pioneer of this type of photomechanical printing. Okakura Kakuzo, director of the Imperial Academy in Tokyo and one of the most influential Japanese art historians of his day, contributed ten short essays focusing on Japanese artworks from different eras.

In 2011 The John Rylands Library collaborated with the Folio Society to produce a limited facsimile edition in two volumes.

The Library has an outstanding collection of fine bindings, from medieval jewelled book covers to contemporary work by designer bookbinders. Many of the examples from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries are part of the Spencer collections, but some have come from other sources such as the Manchester physician David Lloyd Roberts who presented part of his collection to the Library in the 1920s.



**Heures de Nostre Dame ... avec plusieurs prières nouvellement faites par le R. P. Cotton.  
Paris, Eustache Foucault, 1610.**

A fine example of binding by Macé Ruette, active in Paris from about 1611 to 1638. Ruette is traditionally credited with the introduction of marbled paper. Blue chagrin, gold-tooled and decorated with orange, blue and pink cabochons (polished, uncut stones), all edges gilded and gauffered. The gilt-metal and enamel clasps are in the form of tiny scallop shells, the traditional symbol of pilgrims.

#### **Binding for Henri II and Diane de Poitiers, c.1550**

**Oppian.**

**Oppianou Alieutikōn biblia pente: tou autou kynēgetikōn biblia tessara  
Venice, Aldus Manutius, 1517.**

Brown leather on wooden boards, gold-tooled with the arms of Henri II, King of France (1547–59), the interlaced crescents of his mistress Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois, and the interwoven initials H and D. With shelfmark '1327' from the library at Fontainebleau.

After the fall of Constantinople Greek scholars brought manuscripts to Western Europe bound in the traditional Greek manner, and it became fashionable to have printed Greek texts bound in a similar style. The headbands are raised above the edges of the covers at the top and the bottom and enter the covers not from the sides but from the top and bottom edge.