

Dante's great Poem, of which there are reckoned close upon 500 MSS.,* comparison would be inappropriate. But of the Travels of Friar Odoric, a poor work indeed beside Marco Polo's, I reckoned thirty-nine MSS., and could now add at least three more to the list. [I described seventy-three in my edition of *Odoric*.—H. C.] Also I find that of the nearly contemporary work of Brunetto Latini, the *Tresor*, a sort of condensed Encyclopædia of knowledge, but a work which one would scarcely have expected to approach the popularity of Polo's Book, the Editor enumerates some fifty MSS. And from the great frequency with which one encounters in Catalogues both MSS. and early printed editions of Sir John Maundevile, I should suppose that the lying wonders of our English Knight had a far greater popularity and more extensive diffusion than the veracious and more sober marvels of Polo.† To Southern Italy Polo's popularity certainly does not seem at any time to have extended. I cannot learn that any MS. of his Book exists in any Library of the late Kingdom of Naples or in Sicily.‡

Dante, who lived for twenty-three years after Marco's work

* See *Ferrazzi, Manuele Dantesca*, Bassano, 1865, p. 729.

† In Quaritch's catalogue for Nov. 1870 there is only one *old* edition of Polo; there are *nine* of Maundevile. In 1839 there were nineteen MSS. of the latter author *catalogued* in the British Museum Library. There are *now* only six of Marco Polo. At least twenty-five editions of Maundevile and only five of Polo were printed in the 15th century.

‡ I have made personal enquiry at the National Libraries of Naples and Palermo, at the Communal Library in the latter city, and at the Benedictine Libraries of Monte Cassino, Monreale, S. Martino, and Catania.

In the 15th century, when Polo's book had become more generally diffused we find three copies of it in the Catalogue of the Library of Charles VI. of France, made at the Louvre in 1423, by order of the Duke of Bedford.

The estimates of value are curious. They are in *sols parisis*, which we shall not estimate very wrongly at a shilling each:—

“No. 295. *Item*. Marcus Paulus; *en ung cahier escript de lettre formée, en françois, à deux coulombes. Commt. ou ii^e fo. ‘deux frères prescheurs,’ et ou derrenier ‘que sa arrières.’* X. s. p.

“No. 334. *Item*. Marcus Paulus. *Couvert de drap d'or, bien escript & enluminé, de lettre de forme en françois, à deux coulombes. Commt. ou ii^e fol. ; ‘il fut Roys,’ & ou derrenier ‘propremen,’ à deux fermouers de laton.* XV. s. p.

“No. 336. *Item*. Marcus Paulus; *non enluminé, escript en françois, de lettre de forme. Commt. ou ii^e fo. ‘vocata moult grant,’ & ou derrenier ‘ilec dist il.’ Couvert de cuir blanc, à deux fermouers de laton.* XII. s. p.”

(*Inventaire de la Bibliothèque du Roi Charles VI., etc.*, Paris, Société des Bibliophiles, 1867.)