

LAURENTIUS RUSIUS, *Hippiatria sive Marescalcia* (Book on the Health of Horses), in the Italian translation of ANTONIO DE BARLETTA, *Liber de signis bonitatis et malitie equorum et de ipsorum infirmitatibus causis et curis* (Book on the Signs of Health and Illness of Horses and on the Causes and Cures of their Diseases)

In Italian, manuscript on paper
Italy (Pavia?), c. 1530-1560

52 folios on paper, one watermark, bottom right corner, perhaps in the shape of a minuscule 'm' or 'b', not found in Briquet, modern foliation in pencil top outer recto corner, complete (collation i-iii¹² iv¹⁰ v⁶), , blind ruled, 39 to 44 long lines (justification 278 x 177-173 mm.), written in an Italic script (*cancellaresca italica*) in brown ink, red rubrics, decorated 5-line initial on f. 1 styled as a tree trunk, 2- to 3-line red pen initials at the beginning of each chapter, chapter headings written in red ink in the same hand as the main text, occasional pen flourishes in the bottom margin (see ff. 1, 16v, 26, 33v, 35v), another later hand completed the chapter numbers in the table of contents starting at number 92 on f. 49. Contemporary vellum binding, tiny fragments of a Bible (Book of Daniel, probably 13th century) reinforce the binding, title written on the spine, enclosed in a modern half calf cover within a half calf slipcase, both with marbled sides. Dimensions 360 x 250 mm.

Lorenzo Rusio's (d. 1347) state-of-the-art treatise on veterinary science for horses is the best known and most widely read medieval work on the subject. It appears here in a rare fifteenth-century Italian translation, known only in four other manuscripts, none in North American collections. Its large size and long lines suggest a reference copy, not something suitable for practical use in the stables. Going beyond a simple translation, the text adds forty chapters on the preparation and application of medicines for horses, and a table of Latin and vernacular names for plants and herbs.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in northern Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century, c. 1530-1560, based on evidence of the script. The date, "1449," given at the end of the incipit on f. 1 is perhaps the date of this manuscript's exemplar (it is not the date of the translation, which is found in an earlier manuscript, dated 1422, London, British Library, Add. MS 22824). Our tentative localization to Pavia is based on the similarity in orthography in this manuscript with the small samples from Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS Ald. 532 published by Curigliano (2001, pp. 348-50).
2. Private European Collection.
3. Belonged to Johan Dejager (Belgium, 1959-2019), who assembled a collection of over 350 books, mainly 16th and 17th century, from 175 authors across Europe related to horsemanship; no. 8 in his catalogue (van der Horst, ed., 2014).

TEXT

f. 1, [Preface to Antonio de Berulo's translation], *Incipit liber de signis bonitatis et malitie equorum et de ipsorum infirmitatibus causis et curis Aeditus a magistro Laurentio de Vrbe ditto rusio Deductus demum in latinum ydioma a fratre Antonio de berulo 1449. Prohemium libri*, incipit, "La Natura medicinale del Cavalo o del mullo secondo li autori greci et latini non fu lultima anci fu ne lordine la seconda che si como lhomo fu primamente creato ... Sesto de gli vici loro como si debano coregere e i lor beveraci como si debano corpore per diverse cause";

The opening rubric, transcribed in Latin above, includes a detailed title, and identifies the author of this translation: "Here begins the book on the signs of wellness and illness in horses and on their diseases, causes and cures, published by Master Laurentius de Urbe, called Rusius, later translated into the Italian language by Brother Antonio da Barletta. 1449."

ff. 1v-45v, [text] *Capitulo primo: De la natura de gli cavalli*, incipit, "Il cavallo di calda natura estimado, vero che e temperato, il calore si mostra per legereza, velocita, et longheza de vita ... [Ch. 234], *Alchuni vocabuli De herbe diuerse e de diuerse specie de aromati de duerse [sic] lingue et ydioma ...*, ... Hores Eris : Verde Ramo. Cantaride : Cantalene"; [ff. 46-47v, blank];

ff. 48-50v, [Table of Contents] *Questi sonno li Capituli del Libro de la generatione e guida et infirmita e cura de li Cavalli*, incipit, "De La natura de li Cavalli. Capitulo primo; Como a generar Cavalli ..., capitulo 2; ...; *Alchuni vocabuli de diverse lingue redute in lingua taliana [sic]*"; [ff. 51-52v, blank].

Laurentius Rusius or Lorenzo Rusio (d. 1347) wrote his treatise on horse medicine, *Liber marescalcie equorum*, in the early fourteenth century (1302-1306) in Rome and dedicated the book to Napoleone Orsini Frangipani, a Roman cardinal. The treatise proved popular (cf. Poullé-Drioux, p. 40), with multiple translations into Italian and French, including the Italian translation by the Dominican Friar, Antonio Dapera (Antonius de Pera), found in TM 1026 on this site. The Latin text by Rusius was first printed in the fifteenth century in Speyer, not after 1489 (GW M39220); the Italian translation by Dapera was published in Venice in 1543. Rusio's text is a veterinary manual that gives instruction on the proper practices for breeding, raising, and caring for horses. His treatise augments earlier veterinary guides, notably Giordano Ruffo's *De medicina equorum* written in the thirteenth century for Frederick II.

Antonio da Barletta's translation of Lorenzo Rusio's work, found in our manuscript, is rare and exists in only four other manuscripts, London, British Library, Add. MS 22824 (s. xv); Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 315; Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS Ald. 532; Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Achiginnasio, MS A.1586 (Curigliano, 2001, pp. 341-342). In the London copy, there is a dedication to Nicholas III d'Este of Ferrara dated to 1422. Apart from the evidence of these manuscripts, nothing is known of Antonio da Barletta or his life. His translation was edited in two parts in the laurea theses of Marcello Aprile (1988-1989) and Vitaliana Curigliano (1987-1988), neither of which appear to be widely available (we were not able to consult them for this description).

Lorenzo Rusio's text has been divided into 234 chapters in our manuscript. At some point before chapter 15 two chapters are combined leaving the capitulation here one behind that discussed by Curigliano, until a marginal addition of a chapter at chapter 64 brings the manuscript back in sync. In its orthography, the text of this manuscript is closest to the text in

Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS Ald. 532, discussed by Curigliano in her 2001 article on the transmission of Barletta's text (pp. 348-350). Antonio da Barletta, the translator, notes in the preface that the text is divided into six sections: 1. horses' breeding and birthing (chs. 1-21); 2. rearing horses and caring for them (chs. 22-39); 3. recognizing their beauty (perhaps chapter 8); 4. their health and maintenance (chs. 40-46); 5. on their sickness and medicinal remedies for them (chs. 47-195); and 6. various medicinal syrups and salves (chs. 196-234).

Antonio da Barletta's contribution to veterinary science was not simply one of translation. His text adds nearly forty chapters dealing with the preparation and application of medicaments for horses at the end of Lorenzo Rusio's text. Compared with Rusio's emphasis on the surgical orientation of horse medicine, da Barletta's medicinal additions provide valuable insights into the developments of veterinary practice in the fifteenth century. The table of Latin and vernacular names for plants and herbs (ch. 234) demonstrates an interest in creating a standard nomenclature for drugs used in horse medicine.

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