

Colloque, 18 et 19 novembre 2017
Musée Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, Japon

Les échanges culturels au Moyen Âge : du dialogue à la construction des cultures *Cultural Exchange in the Middle Ages: from Dialogue to the Construction of Cultures*

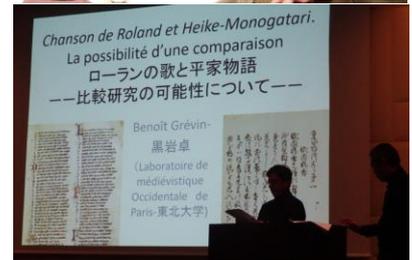
Le colloque, précédé le 17 novembre d'une journée intitulée
Ménestrel au Japon : des médiévistes en réseau
Ménestrel in Japan. Medievalists and their Networks

<http://www.menestrel.fr/spip.php?rubrique1439&lang=fr#4742>



« Ménestrel au Japon », n'aurait jamais été possible sans Mégumi Tanabé qui a conçu, organisé et trouvé les moyens humains et matériels de la réalisation de cette ambitieuse rencontre scientifique. Nous l'avons suivie et accompagnée avec bonheur. Du point de vue de Ménestrel, ce fut la manifestation concrète de l'existence de notre réseau au niveau international. La qualité exceptionnelle de l'accueil dont nous avons bénéficié, la curiosité intellectuelle qu'ont suscité les travaux partagés en anglais, français et japonais durant ces trois jours nous rappellent la responsabilité qui est la nôtre de consolider, affermir ce réseau désormais véritablement international. Du point de vue de la médiévistique, la synthèse conclusive ci-dessous, rédigée par Isabelle Draclants, qui a tenu un rôle important lors de ces journées au côté de Mégumi Tanabé, montre combien il est utile et enrichissant de confronter pratiques et méthodes avec des pairs nourris à des écoles de pensée différentes. Nous avons beaucoup appris, mesuré également notre ignorance en bien des domaines et pour beaucoup d'entre nous, posé les bases de collaborations futures. Grâce à un effort général d'anticipation de la rédaction des articles et de leur traduction, les actes de cette rencontre devraient être publiés sans tarder, en version multilingue.

Pour le Comité de rédaction
Christine Ducourtieux et Hanno Wijnsman



Conclusion
by Isabelle DRAELANTS
(Directrice de recherche au CNRS,
Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (IRHT- Paris))

After this very fruitful and interesting discussion, I have the honor, but also the daunting task, of summarizing the international three-day Conference in which you have participated. The event as a whole was called *Ménéstrel in Japan. Medievalists and their Networks*. The challenge was to organize a meeting on Medieval Studies with members of the *Ménéstrel* network and Japanese partners. I may *now* say that, thanks to the tremendous dedication and constant commitment of Megumi Tanabé – our best Japanese member of *Ménéstrel* – this undertaking has been brought to a successful conclusion. I would like to congratulate her and to express my warmest thanks to her on behalf of each member of *Ménéstrel*. For Christine Ducourtieux, Hanno Wijsman, Alban Gautier, Benoît Grévin and myself it was an unforgettable experience to organize together such a significant event within our network.

Before providing some concluding remarks about the contents of these three very rich and exciting days, special thanks go to Professor Atsushi Egawa, from Osaka University, for his valuable scientific help as counsellor and adviser to the Conference, and to all the colleagues who have kindly assisted Megumi Tanabe.

I would also like to express our gratitude to Mr Shoichi FURUKAWA, Curator of the Museum Yamato Bunkakan, for having opened the doors of his prestigious museum for the time of the conference; his courtesy and hospitality made us feel welcome in his institution.

This symposium could not have taken place without the help of several Japanese cultural, historical and artistic foundations and societies. Therefore, I should like to express our sincerest thanks to the *Japan Society for the French Language and Literature*, the *Netherlandish Art Studies Group*, the *Japan Society for Medieval European Studies*, which sponsored the conference, and to the Foundations that have supported it: *The Western Art Foundation*, the *Yoshino Gypsum Art Foundation*, the *Kajima Foundation for the Arts*, the *French and Japanese Foundation Sasakawa*, the *Murata Science Foundation*, and the *Nomura Foundation*. I would also like to express our gratitude to the societies that have collaborated to organize this event: the Japanese sections of the *International Rencesvals Society* and of the *International Arthurian Society*, the *Kansai Society for Medieval European History*, and also the *Nara visitors Bureau* which ensured to all participants a pleasant and interesting stay.

It is a pleasant duty to warmly thank each of you who participated in this conference, whether by giving a paper, chairing a session, preparing a translation, or

preparing the material part of the event. We were also very honored by the presence of distinguished professors who attended this conference. On behalf of *Ménéstrel*, it is a pleasure to recognize everyone's commitment.

Now, let me outline the scope of our common work. On Friday, the first day was devoted to “*Research Networks and Tools in Medieval Studies*” and several members of the *Ménéstrel Network* presented their activities. The first papers, by Christine Ducourtieux, Hanno Wijsman, Aude Mairey, Alban Gautier, Benoît Grévin, and Anne-Sophie Durosoy, dealt with our website and organization. The first paper, by Christine DUCOURTIEUX, one of the founding members of *Ménéstrel*, and myself, was devoted to the general presentation of *Ménéstrel*. The next papers dealt with specific sections of the website. Hanno WIJSMAN showed the section in which our members or partners present the dissemination by institutions of resources linked to Medieval Studies in various countries. The thematic critical repertory, which is a guide through resources on Medieval Studies available on the Internet, was addressed in the paper by Aude MAIREY and Alban GAUTIER. The more recent editorial rubric devoted to discussions on new or controversial topics was presented by its editorial manager, Benoît GRÉVIN. Anne-Sophie DUROSOY presented the online repertory intended to guide information-seekers through the vast quantity of library resources on Medieval Studies available online.

These papers gave us the opportunity to raise questions about other available tools in Medieval Studies, including, of course, digital ones. Mark SMITH and Dominique STUTZMAN, both of them outstanding specialists in paleography, spoke about present and future challenges for the traditional discipline of paleography.

Subsequently, Aude MAIREY and Joëlle DUCOS, two of our members who are also representatives of two French societies of Medieval Studies, introduced to us the goals and structure of their respective societies, the so-called SHMESP, which comprises all medieval history professors in French universities and researchers specialized in medieval history, and the so-called SLLMOO, the society for the study of the medieval Oc and Oil languages in the Middle Ages. Throughout the day, we had the precious help of Ms Ciyoko INOSAKI, our skillful interpreter. In the evening, we felt privileged to be invited to an exceptional and exquisite dinner at the *Kotoma* restaurant.

On Saturday and Sunday, there was the two-day Conference devoted to the broader subject of “*Cultural Exchange in the Middle Ages, from Dialogue to the Construction of Cultures*”. I dare say that we had the opportunity of engaging in very fruitful cultural exchange and dialogue, thanks to the ongoing commitment our Japanese colleagues, and we can say that we succeeded in building a certain common culture to properly discuss many subjects. In that respect, I should like to thank in particular the translators and interpreters who performed such an essential task in preparing each speaker's text.

We first listened to two preliminary presentations. Mr Shouichi FURUKAWA, Curator of the Yamato Bunkakan Museum told us about the first steps of the foundation and the history of this rich institution. After this presentation, Christine DUCOURTIEUX explained how *Ménéstrel* was born and how it has evolved over time.

The various approaches of the Conference were distributed across five sessions, four of them chaired by our Japanese colleagues, who did us the honor of accepting the invitation. Minoru OZAWA, who teaches at the University of Tokyo, chaired the first session, devoted to the question of religious movements as an expression or a tool of cultural exchange.

Our first speaker was Maromitsu TSUKAMOTO. He dealt with the dynamic Song period (twelfth and thirteenth century CE), during which society was ruled by a caste of scholarly or erudite officials and which transformed Eastern Asia. This society, challenged by the Jin ethnic group, expanded its domination towards the south, into the fertile territories of *Jiangnan*, and witnessed the arrival of Buddhism, even here in Nara with the reconstruction of the *Tôdai-ji* temple which we visited on the morning of the first day. It was very interesting to see the way the artefacts were observed in the collection of the noble Song dynasty. These treasures are now kept in Japan and China. They offer numerous clues with which to understand the cultural politics of the emperors and the erudite officials, as well as the expansion of Buddhism through this artistic and cultural channel, even though in certain periods some officials fought this expansion because of the profit made sometimes from some superstitious practices used as a tool of power.

Alban GAUTIER, our second speaker, discussed the process of conversion to Christianity in Europe during the early Middle Ages (i.e. between the 5th and 8th centuries), and the way this process was accompanied by an acculturation phenomenon in the target societies. But he also focused on the way conversion changed the societies that were the sources of the conversion movement as well. Indeed, it seems that one can see a sort of “germanization” or “celticization” of Christians, influenced in their beliefs, values and behavior by Celtic societies. Alban showed how this was particularly true for the cult of saints and martyrs in England and for prayers for ancestors and friends. It is also the case with the practice of penance in Ireland, which was received in Frankia and Italy, and with sacral kingship and holy war in Germany as well. The “cultural transfer” worked both ways and gave birth to various and quite different “micro-Christendoms” or juxtaposed Christianities in Northern Europe. So, the phenomenon has to be studied as a cultural exchange, not as a mere transfer. Alban also showed that the metamorphosis was already far advanced, due in part to an internal transformation of the balance and nature of power within these territories. More generally speaking, this paper prompts us to pay more attention, in comparative history, to the historian’s difficult task of assigning a phenomenon to one society or to another, to the influence of the first on the second, or the other way around.

The fruitful discussion that followed brought some new examples of these reciprocal phenomena of transfer (such as baptism of the dead practised by Mormons). The question of pagan ancestors of Christianized people, particularly in Japan, was also addressed. Another question that arose was about relics as holy objects transferred from one place to another by emperors to strengthen their power. A final question that was asked was if the abandon of a religious faith in a target society, as a consequence of a conquest, may be seen as cultural transfer.

After an excellent lunch at the *Shogaku restaurant*, our second session addressed the topic of “perception by the other culture”. It was chaired by Ms Junko NINAGAWA, Professor at Kansai University, Osaka. The first speaker was Kenji IGAWA, from Waseda University, who addressed the way Japanese saw foreign countries between the 13th and the 16th centuries (the period considered as the Japanese Middle Ages). Even if such testimonies are quite rare for the period, and sometimes difficult to interpret, they give some information about how China, Korea, Ryukyu, India, Indonesia, and even Europe from the 16th century onwards were perceived by the Japanese. Even if there were actual contacts, for example with Portuguese ships, these distant countries were for the most part not seen directly, but through intermediaries (like the travel story of a Chinese Buddhist monk several

centuries before) and through other written sources that influenced the view of the foreign: novels, paintings, travel narratives.

The case of Myōe, the founder of Kōzanji, is different since he described the landscape of India after travelling there in order to see where Buddha had lived. The Kōzanji temple has preserved a very interesting testimony about a travel diary by Myōe. He wrote about India at a time when there were no direct contacts between India and Japan. The crucial document here was written in 1217, partly in Persian and partly in classical Japanese. A second example was of an imaginary landscape based on a voyage from China to India. A third example was taken from the *muromachi* period and the story of *Sangoku Denki* in the first half of the 15th century, with characters representing people from India, China and Japan who describe their countries. We heard that there is some evidence of a ship coming from India to Japan in 1408, sent by a powerful Chinese resident in Palembang. We also heard about this fictional dialogue of cultures putting on the stage an Indian, a Chinese and a Persian character. Finally, Kenji IGAWA showed that India represented an imaginary and longed-for world for medieval Japanese, who described India based on limited sources that had reached Japan in earlier periods. He argued that Iberian people, including St Francis Xavier, may have been recognized as an extension of this kind of imaginary India.

In the same session, Hanno WIJSMAN showed the excitement associated with the Far East in Western Europe in the 15th c., and more precisely at the court of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, two of the most powerful princes of Europe at the time. They were scions of the dynasty of the Valois dukes of Burgundy and related to the French kings. The contents of their very rich library (almost 900 volumes at Philip the Good's death, of which 400 have survived, and detailed inventories) allow us to get an idea of the real or imaginary perception of the East, in particular from some illuminations in those manuscripts, at a time when Jerusalem was considered by Europeans as the center of the world and its territory as being ruled by the Eastern Roman Emperor from his capital in Byzantium. The Far East was unknown and thus envisioned with imagination, linked as well to the lands conquered by Alexander the Great. H. Wijzman showed that, paradoxically, the narratives and commonplaces disseminated about the Far East remained the same even after some travelers, like Marco Polo, had actually reached the borders of China and returned with eye-witness accounts (but we also know that even Christopher Columbus, when he discovered the first isles of the American continent, was convinced that he had reached India via the west and not a new continent, influenced as he was by the stories of Pierre d'Ailly that he had read). One of the points made is that the stories and other fictional works about exotic regions played a very important role as a vehicle of scientific knowledge. In manuscripts, these stories were transposed into a contemporary setting, for example in the depiction of clothing in a way recognizable to a fifteenth century readership. H. Wijzman concentrated on the manuscripts included in the "Outremer" section of the Duke's library. One of these books contains a medieval French translation of Marco Polo's Book of Marvels of the East. This book was considered to be a scientific book about the knowledge and nature of the world, just as the books about the life of Alexander the Great were considered didactic works to educate princes and other members of the court. The example of Alexander shown as a hero was an incentive to conquer or rule the Eastern world, also with a view to spreading Christianity. From this paper, we may conclude that, even after the Franciscan brother John of Montecorvino went to Beijing at the end of the 13th century, the little-known "Far East" was still a land

considered as fantastical and illustrated with imaginary pictures, even for the most powerful European rulers of the time.

The third session was about the *Effects of Literary Cultural Exchanges*. Taku KUROIWA, who teaches at Tohoku University, Sendai, was the chairman. The first speaker of this session, Anne ROCHEBOUET, addressed the question of “contact languages” as hybrid languages spoken in the “contact areas” between two cultures, with the example of French-Italian in the 13th and 14th centuries in Italy and Outremer. She assumed the point of view of the French texts disseminated in Italy, and tried to see them from a theoretical point of view. She claimed that this French language mixed with Italian, though hybrid, is a part of the medieval French, as shown by the famous Japanese scholar Takeshi MATSUMURA, but not a degraded form of language. This argument has methodological consequences, since it means that if a literary work was written in this language, it should not be “standardized” in critical editions. She argued that the trap of anachronism, with the present extremely centralized perspective of the hegemony of a single and unified French language, must be avoided. These literary productions were not subordinated to a centralized state or nation or to a dominant French court culture in a French-oriented and one-dimensional world, but must be seen as a language specific to a part of the world (in this case, the Mediterranean region). As a lingua franca, this Medieval French-Italian language took many different forms, depending on the widely varying places where it was used, and depending on the literary or administrative genres in which it was used. This paper reminded us that in the past, French was a language used in several parts of the world and considered able to travel, a situation that led to the use of the concept of “Francophonie” to describe these regions. In any case, French was a secondary, supra-local language used in medieval societies where multilingualism was an everyday reality.

The last speaker of this session was Prof. Yoshiko KOBAYASHI, who is conducting an in-depth study of the relationships and similarities between the *Epistles* of John Gower and the late works of Philippe de Mézières, at the end of the 14th c. Philippe de Mézières introduced himself as an aged advisor to a young king and pleaded for a European peace in a time of religious war. Philippe encouraged the king to reconquer Jerusalem but, as Y. Kobayashi showed, Gower used arguments based on natural law to avoid tyranny. Both writers use the character of Alexander, connected to Aristotle, as a counter-example. It was interesting to see how the same ideas were endorsed, albeit with different nuances, by the British writer John Gower.

On Sunday morning, our colleague from the Sorbonne University, Benoît GRÉVIN, chaired the fourth session, on the subject of *Comparatism* between Medieval Europe and Japan. He stressed the fact that it is necessary to distinguish clearly between objects before comparing them one to another. He suggested that we should have a Eurasian point of view on cultural areas. In this particularly fruitful session, the first two papers were dedicated to heraldry, a discipline that is rather recently regaining ground in Medieval Studies.

Encouraged by an exciting visit to the exhibition on Japanese seals in the Neiraku Museum, close to the Tōdai-ji temple of Nara, Ambre VILAIN discussed seals of the rulers and the nobility in medieval Japan and Europe. She stressed their value in both cultures as a validating, authenticating and performative visual symbol, but also as a social codification of a very important representation of membership in a social and institutional group. With various illustrations and examples, she compared, on the one hand, the new practice of sealing in Japan in *Chūsei* (i.e. at the end of the Middle Ages) and *Kinsei* (i.e. at the beginning of modern times), a practice

that replaced the use of the monogram and, on the other hand, the practice of sealing in Europe during the same period, which was gradually replaced by the use of the stamp. Beyond a common anthropological practice and the shared attention to religious protection, she emphasized some differences, such as the lasting and more costly material used in Japan and the heavier weight given in Japan to the representation of the individual. In the West, the name is just part of the legend in a collective system of representation, while the ruler's functional picture is very important. In Japan, the individual identity seems to be more present in the seal.

In a richly illustrated paper, Laurent HABLLOT asked some crucial methodological questions about the long-lasting and dazzling Japanese practice of *Mon* or *Camon*, linked to the exercise of all kinds of powers, and, on the other hand, about the use of coats of arms, badges and emblems in Europe. He highlighted the methodological problem, real since the 19th century, of using the same European and Western lexis or terminology to translate and explain the Japanese emblems, and he showed the risk of misunderstanding that doing so can give rise to in comparative studies. Therefore, in a very clear presentation of the various functions of the emblems, L. Hablot sought to propose an analytical grid applicable to both systems, that would, as a second step, make it possible to analyze each system within its own context and evolution. This is the best way to understand the performativity of the system. In his paper, he stressed the importance of going back to the source itself, and the method of cataloguing heraldry systematically in databases. He also pleaded for abandoning the comparative history of heraldry from a Eurocentric point of view.

The next speakers were Serena FERENTE and Hitomi SATO, who jointly presented, in a very detailed and well-documented paper, the similarities between the Japanese *Ikki* and the Western medieval *Leagues* as sworn societies, both of which are horizontal collective formations. The speakers showed the respective representations of communities as bodies, and analyzed the various ways in which unity and diversity were represented from plurality, in language and other symbols. They chose the case-study of several *ikki* of commoners in *Muromachi* Japan between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, to study the language of legitimacy and union they use to represent themselves. By means of examples about the temple of Honganji and passages from the pastoral letters of Rennyō in the middle of the fifteenth century, they investigated the balance between the inner self, the outer part, and faith in the perception of the body, on a comparative basis with the metaphors about the body in the western Middle Ages. They addressed the way these leagues were focusing on ideal or fictive “egalitarianism”. They showed that Esoteric Buddhism was a source for the legitimation of the *ikki*. In Japan, the language of peace and tranquility was also used as a tool of legitimation of *ikki*, to be compared with the notion of the “common good” through peace in theology and canon law in the medieval West.

Philippe BUC was our next speaker. In a paper focused on methodological and critical issues in historiography, he compared the relationship between religion and war in Catholic Europe between 300 and 1700 (towards the “East”), and in *Mahayana* Buddhist Japan between the year 1000 and 1600 (towards the “Far West”). Philippe Buc particularly stressed the danger of the former historical teleology and illustrated the new methods used in historical comparativism using several Japanese and Western examples. He focused, among other topics, on the bridging figures between warriors and religious specialists. He showed that in both cultures, holy orders were committed to war, but this combination took quite different forms in the two cultures. As he said in conclusion, in medieval Europe the relationship between

religion and war was limited, monopolized, and institutionalized via the military religious orders; in the Japanese situation, the relationship was more common but by no means institutionalized.

The next paper was likewise a joint one. It was presented by our colleagues Benoît GRÉVIN and Taku KUROIWA. They discussed the issue of comparativism and comparative history, taking as their case study a comparison between the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Heike-Monogatari*. (Before the Second World War, the *Chanson de Roland* was presented from a nationalist perspective, to show, in a paradoxical way, the decline of the West and the conquest of Islam). In particular, Benoît Grevin questioned with a critical eye the literary comparative perspective of Teruo SATÔ, who studied both medieval epic poems in a book published in 1973. This seems to be a very fruitful approach if one wants to undertake a French translation of this monumental work, the *Heike-Monogatari*, as the two speakers would like to do. It was a very exciting experience to hear Taku Kuroiwa give a vivid reading of a part of the *Chanson de Roland* in a powerful Japanese translation.

The last session, went even “*Beyond comparatism*”. It was chaired by Professor Shigémi INAGA, who represents the International Research Center for Japanese Studies of Kyoto. This session had an ethnological focus. The first speaker was Yuriko YAMANAKA, who dealt with the key subject of marvel and the marvelous in the Middle Ages. She compared the *mirabilia* (marvels) of the encyclopedic works in the West with the Middle-Eastern equivalent, *ajā’ib*, which also translates as “the wondrous” (Ibn Butlan, 11th century, *Takwīm al-sihha*). Both have some common motifs, and they are also rooted in common sources, such as the *History of Alexander*. Y. Yamanaka chose the case study of the magical herb called Mandrake (*mandragore* in French), a very good example if one wants to study exchanges between adjacent cultures, since this plant is described as having partly the same virtues in Latin, Arabic, Persian, and Chinese encyclopaedias and medical treatises. She spoke about the method of finding mandrake with the help of a dog, looked at the ancient sources (Aelian, Flavius Josephus), and introduced us to modern studies on the comparison with Chinese motifs. One of these is by Kumagusu MINAKATA, who made connections between Chinese *Shanglub* lore and the dog in the Mandrake narrative and showed that *yab-pub-lu* in Chinese equals *Yabrub* in Arabic, and another is by Berthold LAUFER, who showed that there is a relationship between the Arabic sources and the record of Zhou Mi (1232-98) in China. The only Arabic author who transmitted the story of the dog is the Persian al-Tūsî. Y. Yamanaka concluded that the original story came all the way from Palestine to China through Persian sources, thanks to the trade routes.

Jacques BERLIOZ was unfortunately unable to be present in Nara and therefore sent us his text. Through my voice, he compared collections of exemplary tales as a powerful tool to educate and to “have the people believe”, in the religious Buddhist culture of the Far East – that is to say in the Japanese *setsuwa* – as well as in collections of *exempla* compiled in the medieval Christian West. He discussed some examples drawn from the *Tripitaka* and from Western collections, to show how some common motifs were treated in different ways. He spoke, for example, about the case of the old man talking to birds, comparable to the well-known *persona* of Saint Francis. Like many of the other papers, this one drew attention to crucial methodological aspects of comparative history.

Our last speaker was Professor Koichi HORIKOSHI, who addressed the question of a comparative history between military culture in Japan and in the medieval West. With some well-chosen pictures, he focused on several pieces of

equipment used by the cavalry and by knights which appeared in the 5th century in Japan and in the 7th century in the West (stirrups, bows, spears, sabres and daggers). Cavalry armed with bows was used as a military technique by the knighthood in Japan until the 14th century. In the West, knights preferred to go back to spears and sword. The very careful study conducted by Koichi Horikoshi on the social and military contexts in the West and the East allows a better understanding of the history of archery and other military techniques.

The pleasant duty that remains is to warmly thank each of the participants in this exciting and worthwhile Conference. I am sure that we will all remember for a very long time our pleasant and very stimulating stay in Nara. But, before we take off, I would like to make an announcement that will change the face of our Network: Christine DUCOURTIEUX, who is one of the first founders of the *Ménéstrel* network and the one who built and has maintained the website since the very beginning of the network, is going to retire next June, despite the fact that she looks so young. On behalf of the whole of the *Ménéstrel* Network, dear Christine, I would like to say a very special and warm thank you for your indefatigable dedication, your invincible humor and your sweet temper under all circumstances, and for having shared your multiple skills for the benefit of all. To conclude this very fruitful meaning, I would like a round of applause for her.

I leave the floor to Professor Joelle DUCOS, who wishes to say the very last word and express some thanks before we take off.