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MOREL, Louis, sieur de LA GARDE, [*Specimens of calligraphy*]  
In French, decorated manuscript on paper  
[France, Bayeux (Normandy), dated 1597]

69 folios numbered 12 to 57 and 68 to 90, on paper [watermark close to Briquet no. 12741: "pot à couvercle surmonté d'une couronne fleuronnée": Saint-Pol / Pas-de-Calais, 1589; and "le pot à couvercle fleuroné [...] doivent appartenir à la Normandie" (Briquet, IV, p. 626)], title page with text placed in frame of red and blue ink with foliate extensions of acanthus leaves with liquid gold highlights, subsequent capital initials and text block placed in frames traced in red and blue ink (first alphabet) and brown ink (second and third alphabets), framed text surrounded by decorative penwork in alternating red or brown ink, ELEGANT CADEAUX AND ORNAMENTAL INITIALS all traced in brown ink with diverse ornamentation: first alphabet with initials painted on blue grounds with acanthus leaves and profile grotesques highlighted in liquid gold; second alphabet with initials adorned with acanthus leaves, profile grotesques and floral motifs such as pomegranate (f. 37); third alphabet with initials adorned with rinceaux and foliate motifs, some masks or grotesques; initials measure between 40 x 40 and 60 x 60 mm.; [58] letters intact in pristine condition; [9] letters cut out: ff. 12; 30; 34; 35; 53; 58; 61; 63; 64; [2] letters damaged: f. 5; f. 6). Bound in a vertical instead of horizontal format in hard vellum, likely in the eighteenth century by Italian owner, title and date on spine penned in black ink: "Esemplari del Morel, 1597; Pisani, e Recurti [referring to types of letters?]." Dimensions 195 x 140 mm.

Beautifully written and decorated with liquid gold and colors (first alphabet only), this dated set of calligraphy specimens of three types of letters is by an unknown Norman writing master (or student?). Entirely unpublished, Morel's work, which draws on a large repertory of decorative forms, can now be further studied in relation to that of his better known contemporaries, such as Jean de Beaufort, Guillaume Le Gangneur, and Jean de Beaugrand. French examples of this type of work are rare.

### PROVENANCE

1. Louis Morel, *écuyer* from Normandy, town Bayeux. This family bore the following arms: *D'argent au cheval cabré de sable, au chef d'azur, chargé d'un croissant d'or, accosté de 2 molettes d'épéron du même* (see Lachesnaye des Bois, tome XIV, col. 536). His initials L.G. in the opening

initial; his name "La Garde" on fol. 7 and again "La Garde faciebat" (fol. 18). This may be the same Louis Morel, who is cited in BnF, fr. 4014, no. 132, f. 203: "Commission à Loys Morel, prevost general de la mareschaussée de France et province de Normandie, commis par Henri IV pour faire et parfaire le proces criminel et extraordinaire [...] au curé de Marigny, accusé de plusieurs conspirations et entreprinses faictes au prejudice du service du roi."

2. Italian eighteenth-century marks of provenance, on first and last flyleaves: "Lagaresano"; "21 aprile 1775"; various annotations: "Gallera" (f. 58v), "Un essere che mai esistette e colui che cruggia fastidia et fa fremere l'umanita tutta, vuoi saper che e volta il foglio" (f. 67v).
3. Engraved armorial bookplate pasted on front pastedown, Auguste Brölemann (1826-1904), Lyons: "Ex libris A. Brölemann / Vigilantia et Prudentia."

## TEXT

Three alphabets:

ff. 1-24, Rounded script: "Alphabet de escripture ronde francoyse, de la plume de Loys Morel, seigneur de la Garde escrivain a Bayeux aagé de 57 ans"; f. 2, Letter A: "A/lors qu'affliction me presse, ma clameur au seigneur j'adresse, quand souvent viens a le semondre, jamais ne faut a me respondre contre ces lebvres tant menteuses..."; f. 24, Explicit: "Finis coronat opus";

ff. 25-46, Second rounded script [with a different series of majuscules of gothic forms], Letter A: "A/vec le Createur jesusna jadis Moyse // Durant quarante nuictz, aussy quarante jours // Et puis la Loy de Dieu en deux tables fut mise // Laquelle il nous convient observer a tousjours";

ff. 47-69, Italic script: "Alphabet de lettres italiciques anciennes et modernes de la plume de Louis Morel seigneur de la Garde escrivain a Bayeux"; f. 48, Letter A: "A/dam le premier homme a esté faict en ame vivante..."; f. 69, Letter Z: "Z/enon un jour un homme admonestoit de de [sic] // De parler peu et ouir incessamment. Nous // Connoissons que bien sage il estoit Car // Trop parler souvent nuit grandement";

This type of book fits in the genre of writing manuals or calligraphy specimens that circulated in Europe both in print and manuscript exemplars throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries. Whereas scholars have published extensively on Italian and German examples (e.g., Morison, Doede, etc.), little comprehensive research exists on their French counterparts (see Becker, 1997, pp. xv-xvi: "the best [and basically only] current

reference for French writing books is a 1992 sale catalogue from the Paris bookselling firm of Paul Jammes").

Indeed, Louis Morel offers a provincial version, but in manuscript form, of Guillaume Le Gangneur, *La technographie, la rizographie, la calligraphie* [Paris, c. 1600] or the famous French calligrapher and writing master, Jean de Beaugrand, *Panchrestographie*, [Paris, c. 1604] (see Becker, nos. 44 and 45). The calligraphic penwork that frames each page in our manuscript owes much to the tradition exemplified in these two imprints. Compare also a manuscript by another Norman, a student Jacques de la Hayes de Rouen; Jammes, 1992, no. 6). Perhaps the present manuscript was originally unbound and circulated in loose sheets; this might account for the misbinding in a vertical format in the eighteenth century. Since only the first alphabet is highlighted with colors and gold, it is possible that the second two alphabets are incomplete.

These three alphabets also offer interesting parallels with initials found in sixteenth-century printed editions. In particular, the first alphabet can be compared to the characteristic *cadeaux* initials found in Vêrard's editions; the third alphabet with its *evidés* letters and intricate ornamental motifs can be compared to those initials and ornaments found in later sixteenth century editions by French typographers such as the Angelier (Paris), the school of Bernard Salomon (from the print shop of Jean de Tournes, Lyons), or even the eponymous Frédéric Morel (Paris) (see DLF, pp. 863-864). The influence of Tory's Champfleury (1529) is undoubtedly present as well (see Martin, pp. 210-233; and on Tory, DLF, pp. 1127ff).

## LITERATURE

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