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[BLESSED PETER OF LUXEMBOURG], Excerpts from the *Diète de salut* [*Lettres à sa sœur Jeanne*]

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France, likely Paris, c. 1450

35 ff., on thick parchment, complete (collation: i<sup>6</sup> [12-6, of which one is the upper pastedown], ii-iv<sup>8</sup>, v<sup>5</sup> [8-3, of which one is the lower pastedown]), catchwords, written in a rounded gothic bookhand in brown ink on up to 25 long lines (justification 125 x 80), ruled in light red, rubrics in red, some capitals touched in yellow stain, some pen flourishing, 3-line high burnished gold initials on blue and pink grounds highlighted in white tracery (ff. 8, 20v), 7-line high opening initial in burnished gold on parti-colored blue and pink grounds highlighted in white tracery, a gold, blue and dark pink baguette descending along the text in the left margin, illuminated three-quarter border of gold wine leaves on black hairline stems, diverse penwork on blank folios: "Monsieur le lieutenant je vous supplie fayre poyrter sete requeste. . . ." Elegant Parisian mid 16th-century (before 1547) black morocco over pasteboard (likely silver-tooled and now oxidised), back sewn on 6 raised thongs with single leafy blind tool in compartments, blind fillet borders, boards paneled with an elaborate double rectangle interlace and open and solid tools, single initial "L" at center of covers (see Binding section below for comparisons) (Small restorations to head, tail and corners. Light staining to parchment, but else in very good condition). Dimensions 197 x 135 mm.

With an illustrious provenance that includes well-known Renaissance women bibliophiles and a prestigious silver-tooled binding by Jean Picard, the present manuscript contains a spurious epistolary treatise by Peter of Luxembourg to his sister Jeanne. Offering new textual evidence on the *Diète de salut*, which circulated in a relatively restricted number of manuscripts and which has never been edited, the manuscript belongs to a literary hoax, invented to further the canonization of Peter of Luxembourg.

## PROVENANCE

1. Likely copied in Paris, by an identified scribe, with the following colophon: "Qui scripsit scribat semper cum domino vivat Johannes Cordigeri vocatur a deo benedicatur. Sancta Maria succurre miseris" (f. 28v) [May he who has written, write forever and live always with the Lord. He is named Jean Cordier, and is blessed by God. Saint Mary, save us from our miseries]. Two scribes are recorded in Bouveret (1973), III, p. 236: no. 9339, Johannes Corderii, also discussed in C. Samaran, *Catalogue des manuscrits... datés*, II, 1, p. 485: "Le copiste de ce manuscrit, Jean Cordier, est peut-etre le procureur de la nation de France (1472) qui mourut en 1477." Johannes Corderii signed a copy of Iacobus Palladini de Teramo, *Consolatio peccatorum* (Paris, mid-fifteenth century) with the

- following colophon: "Liber iste... scriptus per me Iohannem Corderii, Carnotensem [Chartres] clericum, Parisius studentem" (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 3617, f. 137v); no. 9340, which is precisely the present manuscript, quoted from Paris, Vente Th. Belin (1936), no. 14, with a mistake in the transcription of the scribe's surname: "Qui scripsit scribat semper cum domino vivat Johannes Cordurey [sic, *Cordigeri*] vocatur a deo benedicatur."
2. Copied in faded ink, the name G. de Balsac can be made out on the upper pastedown. This could be Guillaume de Balsac (b. 1517; d. 1555), born in Marcoussis, son of Anne de Graville, brother of Jeanne de Balsac, uncle of Louise d'Urfé. Guillaume de Balsac also inherited books from his mother, and some of these went to the château de La Bastie, where his sister Jeanne de Balsac lodged (On the genealogy of the Balsac family, see Anselme, II, 438). There is also a possibility that G. de Balsac could be Geoffroy de Balsac (d. 1509), brother of Marie de Balsac who married the Admiral Louis de Graville, father of Anne Malet de Graville (see Anselme, II, p. 437).
  3. Claude d'Urfé (1501-1558)? There is an ownership inscription on f. 34: "Ce livre appartient [a Claude] [d'Urfé ?] [...] quy me le treuvera me le ramenera si luy plaiet." This reading must be confirmed, but there is clearly the first name Claude, the surname hardly legible. Claude d'Urfé was bailli de Forez: "[...] un important personnage, et, qui mieux est, un type accompli de grand seigneur de la Renaissance, érudit et amoureux d'art" (Montmorand, 1917, p. 163).
  4. Louise d'Urfé (b. 1537), daughter of Claude d'Urfé (1501-1558) and Jeanne de Balsac (1519-1542). Interestingly, Louise d'Urfé was the grand-daughter of Anne Malet de Graville, learned poet and translator, and was aunt to Honoré d'Urfé (1567-1625) (Moréri, 1759, vol. X, p. 719). The present volume bears Louise d'Urfé's initial "L" in the center of the covers, as well an ownership inscription that reads: "Ce presant livre appartient a Loyse d'Urfé. Une fermese cera victoire de mes pai[nes]". Her name is repeated twice again on f. 4 and twice on the lower pastedown, with a sort of genealogical tree linking *J. d'Urfé* [Jeanne, her mother] – *C. d'Urfé* [Claude, her father] – *L. d'Urfé* [Louise]. Louise d'Urfé married Gaspard de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem in 1553. The couple bought back the lands of Balsac and Paulhac, once owned by her grand-parents Anne de Graville and Pierre de Balsac. The d'Urfé family library was housed in the château de la Bastie, near Monbrison (Forez) and was constituted by both Claude d'Urfé and Jeanne de Balsac: "Il [Claude d'Urfé] avoit la passion des beaux livres, [...] et dressa à la Bastie 'une splendide et riche bibliothèque où il mit plus de 4600 volumes, entre lesquels il y avoit deux cents manuscrits en vélin, couverts de velours verd'" (Montmorand, 1917, p. 164; P. Jacob, 1655, p. 671; on the Urfé library, see also A. Bernard, 1839, p. 46 and Delisle, II, p. 421, who indicates that a number of these manuscripts were bought by the Duc de la Vallière in 1777). Louise d'Urfé's mother, Jeanne de Balsac died young but had inherited the books of her mother Anne de Graville, an important bibliophile and author (see Quentin-Bauchart, *Les femmes bibliophiles*, II, pp. 385-387; see also on Anne de Graville and her library, Montmorand, 1917, pp. 273-281), thus adding to an already considerable collection. Interestingly, the addressee of the manuscript, Jeanne, also happens to be the name of Louise d'Urfé

learned and deceased mother, Jeanne de Balsac (on the d'Urfé family, see Anselme, VIII, p. 500).

5. Françoise de Montmorin [de Saint-Hérem], daughter of Louise d'Urfé and Gaspard de Montmorin, seigneur de Saint-Hérem, with her ownership inscription: "Cest present livre est a haulte et puissante dame Francoysze de Saint-Herem, vicontesse de Polignac, dame de Sollignac, Aulzon et plusieurs aultres plasses, vefve messire Loys dict Armand viconte dudit Polignac, baron de Challanton, Seyssac, Solignac, Randon...et autres plasses, jentilhome ordinaire de la chambre du roy et conseiller en son Conseil..." (f. 35v) (see Anselme, VIII, pp. 819-820). The manuscript was thus transmitted from mother to daughter. Françoise de Montmorin was first married in 1584 to Louis-Armand, vicomte de Polignac.
6. Early seventeenth-century hand (?), with the name "Jean d'Abelhion" copied twice on fol. 1, and perceptible again with difficulty on f. 35. Could this be the same owner that copied the "Role des livres que j'ay dans mon tiroir..." found on fol. 2?
7. Former collection of Mrs. Thomas Belin. Sale, Paris, 19-20 February 1936, no. 14 ([Vente Belin, Thomas, 19/20-02-1936]. *Bibliothèque de Mme. Th. Belin...*, p. 31).

## TEXT

ff. 1-6v, blank; with added inscriptions, annotations and pentrials; beginning of a list of 11 titles out of a list numbered to 25: *Role des livres que j'ay dans mon tiroir*. Premierement Le pedagogue chrestien [likely Outreman, Philippe d', *Le Pédagogue chrétien...*, Rouen, 1634] / 2 / Le tresor de la doctrine chrestienne [likely Turlot, N., *Le Trésor de la doctrine chrestienne...*, Liège, 1631] / 3 / La famille sainte / 4 / Les dix fundemens de la cité de Dieu / 5 / L'instruction des prestres / 6 / Les sermons du caresme / 7 / L'histoire sacree de la passion de Jesus Christ / 8 / L'histoire sainte / 9 / La sainte bible / 10 / L'Iliade d'Homere / 11 / Le roman des dames [perhaps Du Verdier, *Le Roman des dames*, Paris, 1630 (?)];

Written in a 17<sup>th</sup> century hand, this is the beginning of a list of books, likely that of a successive owner, perhaps a priest given the highly spiritual and pastoral nature of the works listed. There are only two non-religious titles, Homer's *Iliad* and the curious *Roman des dames*. The hand that copied this list presents similarities with the one that penned the name "Jean d'Abelhion" (f. 1). Given the highly religious and pastoral nature of the books, could these books be those of a priest?

ff. 7-8v, [Blessed Peter of Luxembourg], Excerpts from the *Diète de Salut*, [Letters to his sister Jeanne], rubric, *Cest la doctrine que Monseigneur saint Pierre de Luxembourg donna et enseigna par lettres a sa seur qui estoit jeune damoiselle*; incipit, "Treschiere seur sur touttez chouses regardez bien vous mesmes..." This letter is printed in the 1505 edition as part of the *Diète de Salut*, on ff. B5v-B6v, transcribed in E. Fourier de Bacourt, 1882, pp. 115-117.

ff. 8v-20, [Blessed Peter of Luxembourg], Excerpts from the *Diète de Salut*, [Letters to his sister Jeanne], incipit, "Grace et paix en Jhesus qui dez vraiz desirans..." ; explicit, "[...] soyent donnez a voustre esperit." Printed in the 1505 edition as part of the *Diète de Salut*, on ff. B6v-C6v.

ff. 21-28v, [Blessed Peter of Luxembourg], Excerpts from the *Diète de Salut*, [Letters to his sister Jeanne], incipit, "Treschiere fille bien ay entendu que par moult de manieres..."; explicit, "[...] Soyez doncquez humble amable debonayre et charitable plaine de foy et d'esperance"; followed in red: *Cy fine le livre Monseigneur saint Pierre Luxembourg lequel yl envoya a sa seur pour la retrayre de l'estat mondain etc.* Printed in the 1505 edition as part of the *Diète de Salut*, on ff. C 6v-D4v.

ff. 29-35v, blank folios, some with pentrials, ownership inscriptions and prayers in French.

The manuscript announces the title of the present work as "... the doctrine that Monseigneur Saint Peter of Luxembourg gave and taught through letters to his sister [Jeanne] who was a young girl." It contains in fact three letters that are excerpts from a larger work variously titled *Diète de Salut*, or the *Livre* (or *Livret*) *sainct Pierre de Luxembourg*, or *Trois journées du chemin de penitence*, an ascetical treatise long attributed to Peter of Luxembourg (1369-1386) and now believed to be spurious. According to legend, Peter was very close to his slightly older sister, Jeanne de Luxembourg (1363-1430), whom he encouraged to live a chaste and unmarried life, although she was a member of a lay community. Living in the family fiefdom of Ligny-en-Barrois and often courted, Jeanne was subject to moments of doubt. In answer to these moments of doubt, so legend has it, the pious and austere Peter, composed his *Diète de salut* (a "diète" being the distance an individual could walk in a given day), admonishing his sister to maintain her vow of chastity and to lead a quasi-religious life. Three independent ascetical treatises composed in the epistolary form are addressed to a young Virgin (the first two letters) and to a married woman (the third letter) (See Hasenhor, 1986, col. 1613, on the evident contradiction since Jeanne of Luxembourg never married).

Bishop of Metz in 1384, then named Cardinal by Pope Clement VII, Peter of Luxembourg died at the age of 18 years old in the Carthusian monastery of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon. An active cult developed rapidly around his name, and King Charles VI, among others, lobbied for his canonization. In 1432, he became patron of the city of Avignon, and he was eventually beatified in 1527 (see Chevalier, *Bio-bibliographie...*, col. 3724; Hasenhor, 1986, col. 1613-1614). It is now thought that the *Vita* of Peter of Luxembourg (*Acta Sanctorum*, July, t. 1, Anvers, 1719, pp. 508-516) as well as the *Diète de salut*, were probably both composed in the fifteenth century shortly after the death of Jeanne de Luxembourg in 1430 to support the case of Peter's canonification at the Council of Basel in 1433.

Hasenhor has identified 21 manuscripts and 5 editions of the *Diète de salut* (G. Hasenhor, 1986, col. 1614). Nine manuscripts are in Paris alone at the BnF (MSS fr. 457, fr. 982, fr. 1836, fr. 12440, fr. 19287, fr. 24437, fr. 24439, n.a.f. 1079, n.a.f. 4382). In most of the manuscripts, the letters form part of the *Diète de salut* (for example, in Paris, BnF, MS n. a. f. 1079), but the first letter begins after the opening of the manuscript, which concludes with the last letter. For this reason, the incipit of the manuscripts ("Quant je regarde quelle vie j'ay menee...") differs from ours, whereas the explicit ("[...] debonnaire et charitable, plaine de foy et d'esperance") is the same. There is no modern edition of the *Diète de salut* or of the letters, and the first printed edition (by Michel Le Noir in Paris in 1505) presents significant textual differences with the manuscripts. Our manuscript, conceived as a continuous uniform text, provides hitherto unknown evidence that the letters circulated independently of the rest of the treatise. The rich, still-confusing, manuscript tradition and its

relationship to the printed editions, warrants further study, and the present manuscript with its illustrious patronage would constitute an important element in such an undertaking.

## BINDING

The fine example of a mid-century Parisian binding is attributed here to the well-known binder Jean Picard (active to 1547; formerly identified as Claude de Picques). Binder to Francis I, Henry II, and Francis II, Picard worked for such famous bibliophile-patrons as Jean Grolier, and he was appointed agent by Grolier to the Venetian bookseller Torresano. Heavily in debt, Picard ceased activity in 1547, and Grolier and other bibliophiles turned to, among others, the Cupid's Bow Binder, named after one of his characteristic tools, and Gomar Estienne, both active in the 1550s (see Hobson, 1991, pp. 59-61).

Incorporating elements of design of the period of Jean Picard, the present binding is similar to bindings attributed to him in its elaborate rectilinear and geometric strapwork (or interlace) and its use of small open or solid tools. A number of the tools that appear here have been identified by Nixon, particularly C. de P. 1,2,3 (repeated in the four angles that is actually composed of the combination of three tools), as well as C. de. P. 4, 24, 27a, 27b, 28, 29 and 30a and 30b (see Nixon, 1965). A similar binding, although gold-tooled, appears in Nixon (no. 92, Philippus Beroaldus, *Opuscula* [1508?]; see also no. 93, Eton College Library, Mercurius Vipera, *De praeclara...* [1520]; compare also no. 100, with hatched tools; and Hobson and Culot, 1991, no. 35, a Parisian binding attributed to Picard, dated c. 1545-1547). The present binding must date before 1547, unless the workshop used the same tools or they circulated among other binders after 1547. Note that the initial "L" found in the center of both covers most likely stands for the first letter of its sixteenth-century owner's name, Louise d'Urfé (not Louis de Luxembourg, as the Belin catalogue, 1936, erroneously suggested). Perhaps Louise's father Claude d'Urfé, a bibliophile himself, had this binding executed for his young daughter, born in 1537.

The absence of gold-tooling distinguishes the present binding from other luxury bindings attributed to Picard, consistently gold tooled. It is likely that this binding was instead tooled with silver, which tarnishes easily to a flat black color and thus no longer shows up on the black morocco covers. A number of later sixteenth-century bindings--mostly penitential bindings--were tooled in silver. See for example a silver-tooled binding made for Thomas Wotton, the "English Grolier," in Needham, 1979, no. 53. A penitential visual reference would be entirely fitting, since the present text is sometimes titled *Trois journées du chemin de pénitence*.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

On Peter of Luxembourg

[http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/p/peter\\_v\\_l.shtml](http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/p/peter_v_l.shtml)

On the d'Urfé Family

<http://hubert.houdoy.perso.cegetel.net/clauurfe.htm>

<http://hubert.houdoy.perso.cegetel.net/porhonur.htm>