

LES ENLUMINURES, LTD
2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel. 1-773-929-5986
fax. 1-773-528-3976
chicago@lesenluminures.com

LES ENLUMINURES
Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58
fax : 33 1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

**PLUTARCH, *De la fortune des Romains* [On the Fortune of the Romans], French translation from the Greek by Arnauld Chandon de Pamiers
In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France, Paris? Fontainebleau?, c. 1530-1540**

28 ff., preceded and followed by two parchment flyleaves, complete (collation: i^s, ii^s, iii^s, iv^s), written in a *bâtarde* with humanistic features (“*humanistique contaminée par la gothique de cour*”) in brown ink, on up to 25 lines (justification 160 x 100 mm.) ruled in red ink, single 4-line high opening initial in epigraphic style in blue on a liquid-gold ground decorated with blue *rincaux* and red floral motifs. Bound in a sixteenth-century (circa 1545) gold-tooled dark olive (color faded?) calf over pasteboards, sides with interlacing ribbons, solid tools (arabesque, crowned letter F), author and title tooled at center of upper and back covers, spine sewn on five bands (upper joint slightly cracked, restorations to sides with some re-gilding, spine redone). Fitted in a full midnight-blue morocco box, with title gilt on spine and “*Exemplaire de Francois Ier*” at the foot of the spine. Dimensions 225 x 160 mm.

This previously unknown manuscript contains the only extant copy of an unpublished vernacular translation of Plutarch presented to King Francis I by its author and still in its original royal binding. It fits with a discrete group of translations of Plutarchian works all destined for the King and bound accordingly. Meriting further study for the importance of their texts, as well as for what they convey about royal patronage and the practice of gift-giving at court, these manuscripts belong to the larger literary-historical context of Francis I’s humanist inclinations and political ambitions.

PROVENANCE

1. Script, decoration, binding, and text suggest the present manuscript was most likely a presentation copy destined for the King of France, François I^{er} (see Text and Binding below). A note in the upper margin in a contemporary hand reveals the title of the work and the translator’s name: “Plutarque de la fortune des Romains traduit de grec en francoys par Arnauld Chandon docteur es droictz prieur de Montferrand en Auvergne.” Thus this appears to be the presentation copy which the translator Arnauld Chandon de Pamiers had copied and bound for François I^{er}. It is probable this manuscript was translated and bound for François Ier during the period the King began reconstructing Fontainebleau in 1528 as an oasis of classical culture in France, buying sculpture and more than 500 classical manuscripts from Italy, many in Greek. In August 1546, the King boasted to the English ambassadors at Fontainebleau about many Greek texts in the library which he had had translated into French (Hobson, “The Bindings of the Fontainebleau Library,” 1989, p. 185).

This is an apparently unique and probably dedication manuscript, presumably destined for the royal library.

2. There is an unidentified pressmark or library symbol "UL 2" besides the initial on fol. 1.
3. Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Barrois (1784-1855), French deputy and energetic bibliophile, not always scrupulous about his sources of acquisition. He owned at least one other manuscript from the library of Francois Ier (now Morgan M. 147). On Barrois, see Hugh Collingham, "Joseph Barrois: Portrait of a Bibliophile," *The Book Collector* 33 [1984], pp. 431-48.
4. Bertram, 4th Earl of Ashburnham (1797-1878). The Barrois Collection was bought by Bertram 4th Lord of Ashburnham in 1849. To quote coverage of the sale by the New York Times, June 29, 1901, "Ashburnham Sale. The Barrois manuscripts...": "The Barrois collection was the result of the labors of a man who, in France, was as accomplished a book thief as Libri was in Italy—only he was satisfied with a few precious things. He was Deputy for Lille before the Revolution of 1848, and was a distinguished scholar and book lover. Originally the collection included 702 manuscripts, among them many fine old texts of French romances and poems. In 1848 it was offered to the British Museum for 6000 pounds but the transaction fell through, and Ashburnham bought it en bloc for 8000 pounds. Later Léopold Delisle proved that about one-tenth of the manuscripts had been stolen from French libraries, and thirteen years ago France reacquired them by purchase." The remains of the Ashburnham-Barrois Collection were subsequently sold by Bertram, 5th Lord of Ashburnham (1840-1913) at auction at Sotheby's, London, 10-14 June 1901, lot 168: see *Catalogue of a portion of the famous collection of manuscripts in the property of the right honorable The Earl of Ashburnham known as the Barrois Collection*, lot 489.
5. Heraldic bookplate of Sir Thomas Brooke Bart. F. S. A. (1830-1908), Armitage Bridge, pasted on upper pastedown. This is Armitage Bridge House, near Huddersfield (Yorkshire). Thomas Brooke's collection is described in *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Printed Books collected by Thomas Brooke, F.S.A. and preserved at Armitage Bridge House, near Huddersfield*. London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891. A passionate bibliophile, Thomas Brooke (1830-1908) owned a large and distinguished library, especially notable for the group of 170 fore-edge paintings and decorated vellum covers painted by Cesare Vecellio on books from the celebrated Pillone Library. The manuscript went by descent to his younger brother Sir John Arthur Brooke (1844-1920) and was sold at Sotheby's, 2 June 1921, lot 1191.

TEXT

ff. 1-28, Plutarch, *De la fortune des Romains* [French translation of *De fortuna Romanorum*], note in the upper margin (f. 1), *Plutarque de la fortune des Romains traduit de grec en francoys par Arnauld Chandon docteur es droictz prieur de Montferrand en Auvergne*; incipit, "Vertu et fortune qui aultresfoys ont eu plusieurs et grandes querelles ensemble ont de present si aspre contention touchant l'empyre romain qu'elles se sont faictes adiourner l'une l'aultre pour debattre en plein jugement a laquelle des deux doibt ester attribute ce beau faict d'avoir mise sus une si grosse puissance..."; explicit, "[...] Car ilz n'estoient moins de cent trente mille homes robustes belliqueux et experimentéz a combattre tant a pied que a cheval."

Plutarch's epideictic essay entitled *De la fortune des Romains* [On the Fortune of the Romans] was part of the collection of essays and speeches known as the *Moralia* [Matters relating to Customs and Mores]. Many generations read and imitated them, including Montaigne and the Renaissance Humanists—which accounts for the flurry of vernacular translations—and the Enlightenment philosophers. Plutarch developed the thesis that Fortune was responsible for the greatness of the Roman Empire and that the high moral character of many individual Romans contributed to their success. There are early Latin translations of the *De fortuna Romanorum*, with Guillaume Budé's Latin translation of a few essays published in 1509 by Gilles de Gourmont, and the famous Aldine edition of the *Moralia* the same year (92 essays). The first complete French translation of the entire *Moralia* was completed by the humanist Jacques Amyot and printed in the famous 1572 Estienne edition.

The present manuscript contains a French translation of Plutarch's *De fortuna Romanorum* from the Greek (in Amyot's 1572 edition, this essay is chapter XLIV) that dates before Amyot's complete edition. A contemporary note copied above the text on f. 1 indicates that Plutarch's work was translated from the Greek into French by Arnaud Chandon "docteur es droictz, prieur de Monferrand en Auvergne." The little-known Arnaud Chandon de Pamiers was a juris-consult who studied in Padua, where he is traced in 1531. He became Prior of the convent Saint-Robert de Montferrand (1552-1558) and occupied the function of "Maître des requêtes ordinaires" for Catherine de Médicis until 1560 (see *État des Officiers de la Couronne*, Paris, BnF MS fr. 7856, p. 2245; see also Aulotte, 1965, pp. 107-112; and Chavy, 1988, pp. 333-334).

This manuscript belongs to a group of presentation copies made for François I^{er} that all contain translations of works of Plutarch, in particular isolated chapters of the *Lives* (see Laffitte, 2001, chapter entitled "Les reliures des manuscrits de dédicace à François I^{er}," "Les traductions de Plutarque," [pp. 22-23]). These translations were either by Arnaud Chandon de Pamiers or by the humanist Jacques Amyot, who dedicated his life to translating Plutarch. Laffitte identifies as many as 6 manuscripts containing isolated *Lives* translated by Chandon that are bound in presentation bindings (Laffitte, 2001, p. 23, note no. 80). She identifies another four manuscripts containing the *Lives* translated by Amyot (Laffitte, 2001, p. 23, note no. 81).

Our research reveals that the present, previously unknown, manuscript is the only known copy of this translation attributed to the translator Arnaud Chandon de Pamiers in a contemporary note on first folio. The copy is textually interesting because it forces us to reconsider the attribution of another French translation in the Bibliothèque nationale de France of the same *Fortune des Romains* (MS fr. 2123) that has traditionally been attributed, evidently wrongly, to Arnaud Chandon. Scholars have advanced two reasons for the attribution of the Paris manuscript to Arnaud Chandon. First, there is a letter addressed by Pierre Brunel to his friend Arnaud Chandon that evokes the latter's vernacular translation of the *De fortuna Romanorum*, thus providing evidence that Chandon did in fact translate the Plutarchian text (see Aulotte, 1965, p. 107). Second, the dedication of Paris, BnF, MS fr. 2123 refers to a translation of the Life of Alexander, which we know Chandon translated and which is found in another manuscript also bound as a presentation copy (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 24927). The presentation manuscript that contains the translation of the Life of Alexander includes a note similar to that occurring in the present *Fortune des romains*, which reads as follows with almost the exact same formulation: "La vie du roy Alexandre composé par Plutarque et

traduite de grec en francoys par Arnauld Chandon, docteurs es droictz, prieur de Montferrand" (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 24927). Thus, although the attribution to Arnaud Chandon of the vernacular translation entitled *De la fortune des Romains* as contained in MS fr. 2123 was defended by Aulotte in 1965, the discovery of the present manuscript calls this attribution into question.

The two manuscripts--MS fr. 2123 and the present manuscript, with the added near-contemporary note explicitly referring to Chandon--present very different texts. Our translation begins, "Vertu et fortune qui aultresfoys ont eu plusieurs et grandes querelles ensemble...", whereas the MS fr. 2123 begins, "Celles qui plusieurs foys par plusieurs et grands combatz ont combattu entre elles..." The Paris manuscript is thus misattributed to Chandon, and the present manuscript survives as the unique copy of the Chandon translation.

Further research into the fascinated tradition of early vernacular translations of Plutarch should shed light on this tangle of attributions and point to the correct authorship of the Paris copy. Aulotte (1965), who was unaware of the existence of the present copy, did not consider the likelihood that MS fr. 2123 is a translation by a different author altogether. Many candidates emerge as possible translators for the Paris copy, Aulotte himself providing an impressive list of more than twenty authors who set out to translate isolated essays and speeches of the *Moralia*, from the fifteenth century to 1571, including such learned men as G. Tory, Denys Sauvage, La Boétie, Pasquier, etc (1965, pp. 127-28). Further research into the authorship of these different translations remains to be undertaken, as well as examination of the practice of giving as gifts presentation copies that were bound in contemporary tooled bindings and destined by the author for a specific recipient (here clearly François I^{er}).

The manuscript is an excellent example of the group of vernacular translations of Plutarchan works (isolated chapters from the *Moralia* and the Lives) that were destined as presentation copies for the king, bound according to the instructions of the authors in bindings that were realized in workshops other than the official royal bindery and that used royal heraldry and symbols. This translation is not published and a study of the Plutarchian presentation copies translated by authors such as Chandon and Amyot would be most instructive for the importance of their text and for further study of royal patronage.

BINDING

This manuscript was bound in what appears to be a dedicatory binding for the King François I^{er} (with the repeated crowned initials "F") that was most likely commissioned by the author himself for presentation to the greatest of patrons. There are many examples of such manuscripts or early imprints, bound luxuriously to be presented to the King (and thus not commissioned by the King himself, but copied and bound by the authors). They are called "reliures de dédicace" or "dedication bindings." According to Lafitte and Le Bars (1999, p. 52): "A coté des reliures royales réalisées dans l'atelier d'Etienne Roffet, [...] on compte un certain nombre de reliures qui, réalisées dans quelques-uns des nombreux autres ateliers parisiens, portent les armes de France ou des emblèmes de la royauté. Ces reliures sont traditionnellement appelées reliures de dédicace car elles recouvrent des textes dédiés au roi par leur auteur ou l'éditeur du volume."

In the present copy, the binder was evidently inspired by the style of such binders as Jean Picard with characteristic interlacing ribbons composing geometrical designs that are found for example on certain Grolier bindings (see Laffitte and Le Bars, 1999, nos. 18 and 19). A number of tools resemble the tools used in the main binderies in Paris of the period (although the re-gilding renders comparisons difficult). The sides of the binding present a repeated tool of a crowned initial "F" with a "rounded" crown that differs from the "straight" crown as found for example on the earlier bindings made for the King by his official binder Etienne Roffet. This rounded crown is found on bindings of the "later period," that is after 1545 (see Laffitte and Le Bars, 1999, "L'atelier de Fontainebleau, 1545-1559," with examples of the initial "F" surmounted by a rounded crown in bindings datable 1545-1547 [no. 28-32]).

There is a binding that offers good comparisons with the present binding described in Laffitte and Le Bars, 1999, no. 20. This binding, commissioned by the printer Simon de Colines, was made to be presented to Francois I^{er} and shows very similar designs and motifs as appear on our binding. It has been labeled a Parisian production by an unidentified workshop, circa 1543. There are also comparisons to be made with the binder known as "Relieur de Salel," who executed a number of bindings in Paris between 1540 and 1545 (see Laffitte and Le Bars, 1999, pp. 53-58).

LITERATURE

Aulotte, R. *Amyot et Plutarque: la tradition des "Moralia" au XVIe siècle*, Geneva, 1965.

Chavy, P. *Traducteurs d'autrefois: Moyen Age et Renaissance. Dictionnaire des traducteurs et de la littérature traduite en ancien et moyen français*, Paris-Geneva, 1988

Hobson, A. R. A. *Humanists and Bookbinders*, Cambridge, 1989.

Laffitte M.-P. and Fabienne Le Bars. *Reliures royales de la Renaissance. La Librairie de Fontainebleau, 1544-1570*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1999.

Laffitte, M.-P. *Reliures royales du département des Manuscrits (1515-1559)*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2001 [Conférences Léopold Delisle]

Lecoq, Anne-Marie. *François Ier imaginaire. Symbolique et politique à l'aube de la Renaissance française*, Paris, Macula, 1987.

Plutarch (tr. J. Amyot). *Les Oeuvres morales et meslées de Plutarque, translattées du grec en françois par messire Jacques Amyot...*, Paris, Michel de Vasconsan, 1572.

Sturel, R. *Jacques Amyot, traducteur des Vies parallèles de Plutarque*, Paris, 1909.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Loeb Edition of the *De Fortuna Romanorum* by Plutarch

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Fortuna_Romanorum*.html

Plutarch's *Moralia* from the Online Library of Liberty

http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1214&chapter=92437&layout=html