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[**ENGUERRAND DE MONSTRELET**], Abridged version of the *Chroniques*, with interpolations of rondeaux, ballads, and short pieces including **CHRISTINE DE PIZAN**, *Epistre a la royne*; **JEAN PETIT**, *Justification de Jean sans Peur* etc.

In French and Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Northern France, Artois (Douai?), c. 1460-1470

182 ff., preceded and followed by 4 paper flyleaves, on paper (watermark close to Briquet, "Lettre P gothique à fleuron à quatre feuilles", no. 8591, Douai, 1456-1457; no. 53, Beauvais, 1460; Douai, 1461; see also type no. 8588, earlier date Lille, 1445; Douai 1450-1451), lacking an undetermined number of leaves at the end (likely a quire) (collation i⁶, ii-viii¹², ix¹⁰, x-xv¹²), some catchwords and quire signatures, written in a bâtarde script by at least two scribes (see change of hand after f. 17, with f. 16 blank, no loss of text but blank page due to change of quire), in brown ink, on up to 32 long lines, ruled in plummet (justification 195 x 135 mm), headings and Latin quotations underlined in bright red, paragraph marks in red, numerous capitals stroked in red, some corrections (suggesting a working copy) with a few passages barred in red (ex. f. 28v). Bound in a modern quarter binding of overturned leather with covers onto which original 17th century vellum have been remounted (pasted on), original covers of blind-stamped vellum with central ornamental motif (original flyleaves of original binding have been preserved, with a clear watermark, a variant of "Foolscap", see Churchill, no. 354, c. 1660; a bit of staining, never affecting legibility). Dimensions 295 x 215 mm.

This particularly interesting version of the extremely rare Chronicles of Monstrelet includes prose and verse interpolations, some otherwise unknown and apparently unedited. The manuscript merits further study in its historical context for it seems to construct a work that--with interpolations--centers on decisive events or issues during the turbulent reign of the mad King Charles VI, particularly the conflict between the feuding Burgundians and Armagnacs.

PROVENANCE

1. Script and watermarks suggest a northern French origin for this manuscript, likely copied mid-century in a region that would have especially appreciated the Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet, granted the author spent his life in nearby Cambrai in the service of Jean de Luxembourg and given Artois was a Burgundian possession.

2. Count Wolfgang Sigismund von Gallenberg (1706-1773), with his inscription in French: "A Leide, 1727. Sigismond comte de Gallenberg. 9 sols."

3. Another inscription, copied in blue felt pen: "Ex libris Erich Crumbach [or Crumbacher?], 1939" and added beneath in black ink: "Wien-Österreich."

TEXT

This codex contains an abridged version of Book I of the *Chroniques* of Enguerrand de Monstrelet, for the years 1400 to 1408, with a number of interpolations and poetic texts that do not figure in the complete Chronicles. Some of these ballads most certainly exist elsewhere and should be studied further as examples of popular lyric culture. It is most interesting to find them interpolated in such a manner in the body of historical chronicles.

The French chronicler Enguerrand de Monstrelet (1390?-1453) was most probably a native of Monstrelet, a village situated in the present department of the Somme. His life was spent at Cambrai in the service of Jean of Luxemburg. The Chronicle of Monstrelet opens with a mention of the coronation of Charles VI, which took place in 1380 but its true starting-point is Easter 1400, when the history of Froissart finishes, and it extends down to 1444 (there was a continuation till 1467, death of the Duke of Burgundy, but this is by a continuator). The first book covers mainly the civil war that opposed the Houses of Orleans (Armagnacs) and Burgundy (Burgundians), and the ongoing Hundred Year War between France and England. As a historian, the chronicler is relatively sophisticated in his methods. His is an original composition skillfully mixing written and oral sources, which the author confronts, verifying them, evaluating them, and adding to them based on his personal experience (for this view of Monstrelet, see DLF, *Moyen Age*, p. 410).

Extant manuscripts of the *Chroniques* are relatively rare. Of the nine recorded manuscripts, one is incomplete and four are abridged versions (Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 2678 and fr. 2863; Paris, Arsenal, MS 3840 and Paris, Arsenal, MS 5084). The Paris BnF manuscripts do not contain exactly the same Monstrelet text excerpts nor the interpolations found in the present manuscript. We have not had a chance to compare the Arsenal manuscripts. The manuscript tradition of the *Chroniques de Monstrelet* has been studied by Douët d'Arcq in the preface to his 1857 edition, and some information on the manuscript tradition can also be found in *Grundriss der Romansichen Literaturen des mittelalters*, 1993, no. 14365. The early printed tradition of the *Chroniques* is also of interest, with the first edition by Vêrard, without date, circa 1470. There are two nineteenth-century editions of Monstrelet's Chronicles, Buchon, 1826 and Douët d'Arcq, 1857 (see references in Literature below).

It is useful to compare Douët d'Arcq's edition (based on the complete manuscripts) and the present abridged version. Although the work is quite voluminous, we have chosen a passage which reveals how the present manuscript includes passages from the Monstrelet Chronicles but chooses to exclude others and chooses instead to interpolate verses or poems. For example, on ff. 14v-15, the chronicle in our manuscript follows word for word the text published by Douët d'Arcq, vol. I, ch. VIII, p. 42-43, but only up to a certain point. The present manuscript ends the narrative at: "[...] Qui fut faicte en l'an de l'incarnacion nostre seigneur mil .cccc. et deux le premier jour du moys de juing" (fol. 14v), whereas the Douët d'Arcq edition of the complete version goes on for another paragraph (Douët d'Arcq, vol. I, ch. VIII, p. 43). This last paragraph has been replaced in our manuscript by a "Ballade faicte dudit seneschal," beginning "Seneschal vaillant et sage / De Haynault plain valoir / Chevalier de vassalage..." We could multiply such examples, as the present manuscript contains a number of interpolations or additions of short texts – most often ballads –

that are not recorded, or that further research might permit identification (see even opening page, where the incipit "A dont furent les grans pardons a Romme..." [present in Monstrelet] are followed by a "Ballade de la mort" and a "Rondel de theologie" that do not figure in Monstrelet's complete *Chroniques*, see also other ballads and rondels on ff. 30v; ff. 51v-53v; ff. 54-57; ff. 62-62v; ff. 63v-64v).

ff. 1-182v, [Abridged Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet], covering the years 1400 to 1408, heading underlined in red, *L'an de grace mil .cccc.* ; incipit, "A dont furent les grans pardons a Romme. Si furent grans mortalitez en plusieurs pays qui longuement durerent lors fut faite une ballade de la mort nostre seigneur comme il s'ensuit. Amour qui fais le seraphins ardoir / En leur moustrant ta deité haultaine / Veulliez mon cuer ma vie et mon vouloir / Sy separer de toute amour mondaine / Que de l'amour dont tu es la fontaine..."; followed by another heading, underlined in red, *Rondel de theologie*; incipit, "Pecheur qui demande pardon / Sachiez qu'il te fault pardonner..." [not in Sonet, 1956] (ff. 1-1v); heading underlined in red: *L'an mil .cccc. et ung. .i.* [un] *escuier d'aragon envoie unes lectres en engleterre pour certaine emprinse d'armes comme il s'ensuit* (f. 2v); incipit, "Ou nom de dieu de la benoite vierge marie de saint michel l'archangle et de saint george, je, michiel d'oris escuier..." ([Douët d'Arcq ed.], vol. I, p. 11); last heading, *De ceux qui furent decapitez au siege*; incipit, "Le dimence au matin le duc de bourgogne se parti de flavie et monta es montaignes avec ses seronges..."; explicit: "[...]" (Text interrupted: our manuscript ends in the midst of chapter 47 of Douët d'Arcq's edition [Livre I, ch. 47, p. 369], and Book I is complete in 50 chapters; the present manuscript is thus lacking the events covered in chapters 48 to 50).

Amongst the interpolations in these abridged Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet are a number of noteworthy texts (all might not have been accounted for as a complete study of the manuscript would be required to determine exactly which sections of the text are excerpts of the complete *Chroniques*, and which are not found in the complete work.) Here are some we choose to signal out:

ff. 1v-2v, Rondel attributed to Nicolas Flamel, heading underlined in red, *Maistre Nicholas Flamel ung escripvain demourant lez l'eglize parociale de saint Jacques de la Boucherie fist faire plusieurs portaulx aux eglises et fist le rondel qui s'ensuit*; Roundel begins: "Helas mourir convient sans remede home et femme / Trop mal nous en souvient / Helas mourir convient / Le corps cendre devient...";

The existence of Nicolas Flamel (1340-1418) is often shrouded in mystery and legend, and some of his work is considered spurious. Nevertheless, the present verses are attributed to him (see below f. 53v). The historical Flamel was born near Paris around 1330. He initially worked as a public scrivener, making copies of documents, and this developed into a career as a bookseller, as he bought and sold manuscripts. In addition, he was a master scribe and calligrapher, finding, producing, and reproducing manuscripts under the purview of the University of Paris as a *libraire-juré*, a "bonded bookseller," He funded many building projects around Paris, hospices for the poor and repairs to churches, notably Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie, near which there is a "rue Nicolas Flamel," renamed for him in 1851. A house of 1407 built for him still stands; it is the oldest stone house in Paris, and its present address is 51 rue de Montmorency (see N. Wilkins, *Nicolas Flamel: des livres et de l'or*, Paris, 1993).

ff. 1v-2v, Poem by Laurent de Premierfait, "Abusions" (in French), heading underlined in red, *L'an mil .cccc. maistre lorens de primofacto [Laurent de Premierfait] feist les abusions qui s'ensuivent*, begins: "Puisque prestres de servir dieu cesserent / Les roys science despiterent / Prelats vilz mestiers exercerent...";

These "abusions" [poem on the "abuses" (errors or folly) of the world and the general decline of morals] are likely a vernacular translation of a Latin poem, for which we have not found the original amongst the published poetry of Laurent de Premierfait (see G. Ouy, "Poèmes retrouvés de Laurent de Premierfait. Un poète 'engagé' au début du XVe siècle," in Bozzolo, C. *Un traducteur et un humaniste de l'époque de Charles VI, Laurent de Premierfait*, Paris, 2004).

ff. 51v-53v, Parody of the Our Father [Parodie du Pater Noster en 27 quatrains], heading underlined in red, *En ce temps fu fait a paris une pater noster qui s'ensieut sur les erreurs abusions et oultrages des gouverneurs et autres*; incipit, "Pater noter qui es bien saige..." [Sonet, p. 291, no. 1666; published in A. Langfors, 1917, pp. 150-158; E. Lloven, *Parodies de themes pieux dans la poésie française du Moyen Age*, 1975, p. 152].

Composed in the fourteenth century, this political and satirical parody on the Our Father is known in only three other manuscripts: Beaune, BM, MS 7, f. 223; Brussels, BR, MSS 11000-11003, f. 250; Geneva, Bibl. Univ. MS 179 bis, ff. 8-9v (incomplete).

f. 53v, Verses attributed to Nicolas Flamel, heading underlined in red, *Nicolas Flamel. Entre les autres bonnes exortations theologiennes qu'il escript feist en ce temps entaillier en pierre que les damnez crient en enfer comme il s'ensieut*; incipit, "Las je ne cuidoie mie / Sy tost mourir / Trop tard repentir...";

ff. 54-57, Christine de Pizan, *Epistre a la royne*, heading underlined in red, *L'epistre demoiselle chistine de pizan qu'elle feist en ce temps pour le bien et paix du royaume de france*; incipit, "A tresexcellente et puissante princesse ma dame yzabel par la grace de dieu royne de france...";

The *Epistre a la royne* is a short prose piece written in 1405. Christine is in search of a remedy to put a stop to Civil War in France between the men of the duc d'Orléans and the Burgundians. Christine reminds the Queen Isabeau de Bavière of the brave feats of noble ladies in history who obtained peace against all odds.

The *Epistre a la royne* can be found in the following manuscripts: Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 580, fr. 604, fr. 605; Oxford, All Souls, MS 182. Published in Josette A. Wiseman (ed.), *Christine de Pizan. The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life, with An Epistle to the Queen of France and Lament on the Evils of the Civil War*, New York and London, 1984, pp. 70-83 (Wiseman's edition is based on the Thomassy 1838 edition, that follows Paris, BnF, MS fr. 580, the only manuscript containing the "Rondeau"; see R. Thomassy. *Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan, suivi d'une notice littéraires et de pieces inédites*, Paris, 1838 [first edition of the *Epistre a la royne*]; see also an edition in M. D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions from All Souls Manuscript 182*, Oxford, 1941).

ff. 62-62v, *Ballade sur les abusions du monde*, heading underlined in red, *En ce temps fu faite a paris une ballade sur les abusions du monde comme il s'ensuit*; incipit, "Se dieu ne fait les pechiés remouvoir...";

ff. 80-118, Jean Petit, *Justification de Jean sans Peur*; heading underlined in red, La proposition de maistre Jehan Petit; incipit Prologue (f. 80v), "Par devers la treshaulte et tresnoble magesté royale...";

Doctor in theology in the University of Paris, Jean Petit (c. 1360-1411) is best known for his work entitled "Justification du Duc de Bourgogne" or "Justification de Jean sans Peur." This work became the center of a long controversy which was waged between 1407 and 1419 on the question of tyrannicide, due to efforts to justify the murder on 23 November 1407 of the duke Louis of Orléans by the followers of Jean sans Peur. Jean Petit read his *Justification* before the "Conseil du roi" gathered in the Hotel Saint-Pol. His work was condemned by many, including Jean Gerson in 1414. A critical edition of this important text was published by Coville, based on the examination of 11 manuscripts (see A. Coville, 1932, especially chapters entitled "Les manuscrits et le texte de la Justification du duc de Bourgogne," pp. 133-168; "Les abrégés de la Justification au XV^e siècle," pp. 169-178). The *Justification* is also incorporated by Enguerrand de Monstrelet in the body of his *Chronicle* and is maintained here in the abridged version of the *Chroniques* (On Jean Petit, see Coville, 1932; see also *Dict. des lettres françaises, Moyen Age*, p. 833-834).

This complex compilation of texts merits further study within the historical context of the manuscript. Not all the texts of the manuscript have been edited, and those editions that exist (e.g. for Monstrelet) are now outdated. The small number of extant copies of most of the texts, including the core work, Monstrelet's *Chronicle*, and the relatively restricted circulation of the manuscripts give reason for optimism that such a modern critical edition with a renewed study of the works would be a feasible scholarly project.

Manuscripts of these works are virtually non-existent in North American collections. The only copy of Monstrelet to change hands since 1906, according to the Schoenberg Database, was sold in 1960. The Database records no copies whatsoever of works by Nicolas Flamel, nor of Jean Petit's *Justification*.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

English translation of the Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet

<http://www.maisonstclair.org/resources/chronicles/engurranddemonstrelet/chronicleofengurranddemonstrelet.html>

Biblioteca Augustana on Christine de Pizan

http://www.fh-augsburg.de/~Harsch/gallica/Chronologie/15siecle/Christine/chr_intr.html