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**GUY DE FONTENAY (c. 1486-1570?), *L'oraison de Nostre Seigneur donnee a ses apostres*  
[followed by] *Les sept pseaulmes penitentialx du prophete royal David*  
In French and Latin, illustrated manuscript on parchment  
Central France (Berry or Nivernais?), 1554**

*136 pp., preceded by two paper flyleaves, followed by one contemporary parchment flyleaf and two modern paper flyleaves, complete, in regular gatherings of 4 (collation: i-xvii<sup>1</sup>), paginated, written in a slanted italic script, in brown ink, on up to 15 lines, parchment ruled in red ink (justification 86 x 54 mm.), some text highlighted in red ink, small painted initials in red or blue on yellow grounds, some grounds with arabesque motifs, 8 pen drawings traced in brown ink and colored in wash and gouache. Bound in nineteenth-century later rigid parchment, back sewn on 4 raised thongs, with gilt fleurons in compartments, second compartment with "Heures" in French, gilt edges, marbled paper pastedowns and first flyleaves (Some internal soiling to parchment, although for the most part in clear legible condition, some). Dimensions 125 x 80 mm.*

Interesting example of a paraphrastic French adaptation of the "Our Father" and a selection of Penitential Psalms, composed in a Catholic environment during the Council of Trent just before the interdiction or general dissuasion of the reading of vernacular translations of the Bible promulgated in 1559. Written by a little known yet prolific author, the work has never been published and merits further study for its dogmatic, linguistic, and artistic value with its delicate colored pen drawings.

#### PROVENANCE

1. The date on pp. 1 and 25 of 1554 is consistent with the script and style of the colored pen drawings. The stated author of these translations is Guy de Fontenay, canon of Nevers, who spent most of his life between the Berry and Nivernais regions of France, and it appears quite plausible the manuscript was copied in those parts of France. This could very well be the author's copy (autograph?).
2. Partially effaced inscription on p. 85 that reads "Louis (?) Linot Jasque. 1551-1611 (?)." Another apparently late 17th c. inscription on first back flyleaf: "Jeanne Francoise Delacube Desverges." There is a Françoise Delacube (1681-1744) born and died in Vatan (Berry region, dept. Indre).
3. Nineteenth-century ex-libris on the second paper flyleaf: "L'abbé Dubouchat."

4. Engraved (19th c.?) unidentified motto set in a heart lined with colored foliate and floral motif, pasted on verso of second front flyleaf: "Soyez indulgent pour les pauvres."

## TEXT

pp. 1, Title-page, "L'oraison de Nostre Seigneur donnee a ses apostres par maniere d'instruction a faire priaires a Dieu, delaquelle chascune clause est interpretee, traduite [en françois] selon l'intelligence de plusieurs docteurs catholicques par messire Guy de Fontenay grand archidiacre et chanoyne de Nevers. 1554. *Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris. Ecclesiastes .16.*"

pp. 2-3, Latin and Biblical mottoes, beginning "Hoc fac et vives" [Do this and you shall live]; ending, "Non prodest strepitus labiorum, ubi cor est mutum";

p. 4, Illustrative vignette (see below) followed by: "Les apostres comme il est escript au sixiesme monsieur saint Mathieu, et a l'unziesme monsieur saint Luc ont demandé a nostre seigneur comme il failloit prier, lequel leur respondit, dictes ainsi qu'il s'ensuict";

pp. 5-19, Latin text of the Our Father, followed by translation in French, heading, *Pater noster qui es in celis*; French translation, "En ce commencement celluy qui prie [...] la benevolence de dieu, disant: Nostre pere coeleste, nostre createur, redempteur, educateur, directeur..."; ending, "*Sed libera nos a male. Contre Envye. Mais delivre nous mesmement du mal et peché... Amen. Ce mot est adiousté a l'oraison dominicale pour la confirmation des choses precedentes et est une diction hebraicque qui vault autant a dire comme Ainsi soit fait*";

pp. 20-24, blank;

p. 25, Second Title-page, "Les sept pseaulmes penitentialx du prophete royal David interpretez au vray sens mystique par les saintz docteurs monseigneur saint Hyerosme, saint Augustin, saint Ambrois, saint Remis, Ysidore, Raban et Cassiodore. Traductz de latin en francois a l'utilité du simple peuple par messire Guy de Fontenay grand archidiacre et chanoine et Nevers. 1554";

pp. 27-132, Latin text of a selection of Psalms, followed by French prose translation and paraphrase: "*Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me, neque in ira tua corripias me* [Psalm 6]. O seigneur (je te prie) en ta fureur implacable, et en ton dernier jugement ne me reprendz, par une severe rigueur de justice, et ne me chastie en ton yre de indignation, et de vindicte, ne me condamnant a mort eternelle"; last Psalm: "*Et perdes omnes qui tribulant animam meam quoniam ego servus tuus sum* [Psalm 143]. Et au futur et dernier jugement perdras tous ceulx qui affligent par injures et molesties mon ame devote a toy, car je suis et seray a jamais ton serviteur mancipé et entierement dedié a tous tes commandemens"; ending, "*Gloria patri et filio et spiritui [sic] sancto. Gloire soit au pere, et a filz et au saint pere [...] Amen. Ainsi soit il*";

pp. 133-136, Biblical and patristic extracts, in Latin.

The text contained in this manuscript is an apparently unrecorded and unpublished work by Guy de Fontenay, a French poet and translator. Guy de Fontenay (born c. 1486, died c. 1570 according to Villenaut, 1900, p. 565) was born in the Berry region, in a small hamlet called Fontenay (near

Tendron, canton de Nérondes, département du Cher; see Frémont, pp. 502-503), the eighteenth child of Guillaume de Fontenay (gentilhomme du duc d'Orléans) and Philiberte de Digoine. The Fontenay family was prominent in the Berry region. Guy was canon of Nevers, professor at the University of Bourges and perhaps director of a "gymnase littéraire." He published between 1507 and 1555 a number of works for the most part listed in Roman d'Amat, 1979, col. 346, all in Latin, all quite rare and scarce. Like other members of his family, Guy relied on the church, and particularly the Cathedral of Nevers, for his income: his uncle Pierre de Fontenay was Bishop of Nevers from 1461 to 1499. His most famous literary relation was the poet Octavien de Saint-Gelais, bishop of Angoulême 1494-1502, the son of his aunt Philiberte de Fontenay and Pierre de Saint-Gelais, seigneur de Montlieu.

This manuscript contains paraphrastic French adaptations and digressions on the Latin "Our Father" and on a selection of Penitential Psalms. These paraphrastic adaptations and digressions were composed in 1554 in a clearly Catholic environment as stated on the opening title-page: "[...] traduite [en françois] selon l'intelligence de plusieurs docteurs catholiques..." some ten years after the inauguration of the Council of Trent in 1545 (which convened until 1563). The manuscript should thus be understood in the context of the Counter-Reformation, which constituted a reaction to the rise and success of Protestant Reformation movements in Europe and more specifically in France. From a literary point of view, the present adaptations of the "Our Father" and especially of a selection of Penitential Psalms are not clear translations, but rather prose paraphrases. The paraphrases of the Psalms are clearly composed in opposition to the very popular translations of Clément Marot and Theodore de Bèze, championed by the Protestant Reformation (Les "Psaumes des hérétiques"). They are rather in the spirit of the later poetic prose adaptations of the Psalms by Blaise de Vigenère (B. de Vigenère, *Psautier de David tourné en prose mesurée*, Paris, 1588; see Dupuigrenet, 1991, no. 152). The present paraphrastic translation was composed shortly before the promulgation in 1559 of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Index of Trent): "Since experience teaches that, if the reading of the Holy Bible in the vernacular is permitted generally without discrimination, more damage than advantage will result because of the boldness of men, the judgment of bishops and inquisitors is to serve as guide in this regard. Bishops and inquisitors may, in accord with the counsel of the local priest and confessor, allow Catholic translations of the Bible to be read by those of whom they realize that such reading will not lead to the detriment but to the increase of faith and piety. The permission is to be given in writing. Whoever reads or has such a translation in his possession without this permission cannot be absolved from his sins until he has turned in these Bibles ..." (Rule IV, *Die Indices Librorum Prohibitorum des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen, 1886, page 246).

There appear to be very few extant manuscripts by this author, who is praised by his contemporaries in the only other manuscript known to us, which contains an extensively illustrated work on the Four Cardinal Virtues entitled *Traité des quatre vertus principales dites cardinales précédé d'un discours sur la vertu*, dedicated to Marguerite de Bourbon-Vendôme, duchesse de Nevers (1516-1589) (On this manuscript, see the entry also posted on this site [www.textmanuscripts.com](http://www.textmanuscripts.com)). Very little has been written on Guy de Fontenay, the only study being an outdated article by A. Pérémé (1862). We have found no mention of the present work, or any mention of this manuscript, which appears to be the only copy of a work that was never printed.

## ILLUSTRATION

There are eight pen drawings traced in brown ink and colored in wash and gouache, by an anonymous artist, perhaps recruited locally by the author Guy de Fontenay. The drawings resemble small vignettes, measuring 54 x 32/33 mm., placed on blank pages, facing the text. Although the images do not refer directly to specific passages of the text, the illustrations adopt funerary or eschatological scenes in keeping with the spirit of the Penitential Psalms. The drawings bear the influence of the small engraved vignettes that illustrate emblem books and are clearly also under the influence of the Fontainebleau aesthetic. Further study and comparisons are necessary, but it seems that some of the compositions resemble the engravings attributed to Bernard Salomon (1506-1561), famous illustrator and engraver, active in Lyon, whose engraved vignettes are found in a number of c. 1550-1560 editions, in particular those printed by Jean de Tournes. The small column-wide woodcuts that illustrate the De Tournes *Sainte Bible* (first printed with woodcuts in Lyon in 1553, then again a number of times, in Latin [Lyon, 1556] and in the vernacular in English and in Italian), although much more refined, share some compositions and a similar aesthetic. Compare for instance the woodcut depicting Jesus and the Centurion (*Biblia Sacra*, Lyon, De Tournes, 1556, p. 534) and the Son of Man surrounded by the Seven Candlesticks (*Biblia Sacra*, Lyon, De Tournes, 1556, p. 651). The italic script preferred in the present manuscript also echoes the preferred type of the second half of the sixteenth century, often favored in emblem books but also in such works as the *Quadrins historiques de la Bible*, Lyon, Jean de Tournes, 1553, with quatrains by Claude Paradin printed in italic script and placed beneath the woodcuts by Bernard Salomon (see *Le dessin en France...*, 1994, pp. 226-228).

p. 4, Sermon on the Mount [Matthew, 5: 1-48];

p. 26, Agony of a Sick Man;

p. 36, Scene of Judgment [David (with his harp) kneeling before Nathan?];

p. 49, Soul rapt by God the Father from a Dying Man;

p. 69, Scene of Sacrificial Worship;

p. 88, Jesus in Capernaum before the kneeling Centurion [Matthew, 8: 5-13];

p. 112, Scene from the Apocalypse: The Son of Man and the Seven Candlesticks [Revelation, 1: 12-17];

p. 120, God the Father in Heaven.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

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