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**A List of 267 French Texts in Tours:
a Hub for Reading in the Vernacular**

di Margriet Hoogvliet

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A List of 267 French Texts in Tours: a Hub for Reading in the Vernacular*

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In 1868 the French medical doctor and historian Achille Chéreau published an edition and study of an exceptional late medieval document: a handwritten list summing up more than 267 titles of a collection of manuscripts and printed books in French, present in Tours and dating, according to him, from the second half of the fifteenth century (Ill. 1)¹. Chéreau was certain that the list was «le catalogue d'une maison de librairie tenant boutique à Tours»². The bookseller «était probablement le propre copiste des manuscrits qu'il mettait en vente»³, because the works date all approximately from the second half of the fifteenth century, or were still popular during that period⁴. The heading of the inventory also contains a geographical indication: «A Tours devant l'ostel monseigneur de Dunois»⁵. Chéreau concluded correctly that this is the hôtel de Dunois, situated in the Grand Rue (at present the rue Colbert), close to the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Julien, on the corner of the Rue Neuve (at present the rue Jules Favre) (Ill.

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¹ CHÉREAU, *Catalogue*. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 2912, ff. 78r-82v. A black and white microfilm can be consulted online on Gallica, on the url <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10720652f/f96.image.r=français%202912>. A diplomatic transcription of the booklist is reproduced at the end of this article.

² The catalogue of a book maker keeping a shop in Tours.

³ Was probably the actual copyist of the manuscripts that he was selling.

⁴ CHÉREAU, *Catalogue*, pp. 7-8.

⁵ In Tours in front of the hôtel [city residence] of monseigneur de Dunois.

2)⁶. «Monseigneur de Dunois» would be in Chéreau's opinion «François, 1^{er} du nom, comte de Dunois, de Longueville, de Tancarville, gouverneur du Dauphiné, grand chambellan de France, fils du bâtard d'Orléans, [...] mort le 25 novembre 1491»⁷. This date would be the *ante quem* of the inventory.

Subsequent historical and literary research has almost unanimously accepted Chéreau's conclusion that the list would have been the inventory of a bookseller's shop, while Graham Runnalls, who gave a new diplomatic edition of the text of the inventory in an article published in 1984, even tried to identify the bookseller in Tours as Jean Sassin or Sessin, agent in Tours of the Parisian printer Antoine Vérard⁸. In her study of Antoine Vérard, Mary Beth Winn proposed identifying the Tours bookseller as Thibaud Bredin, who is known to have concluded several contracts with Vérard between 1505 and 1509⁹. All this was rejected by Colette Carton in an article published in 1993, in which she rightly observed that the conclusion that the list would be the inventory of a bookseller is not sustained by any historical documentation: «Suggéré par l'adresse, car absolument rien d'autre ne le justifie. Pure supposition de l'auteur qui n'y apporte aucune preuve. Les feuilles coupées ne laissent voir ni quantités d'ouvrages, ni évaluation»¹⁰. Carton proposes a different thesis instead: the list would have been the inventory of books confiscated in 1527 from Jacques de Beaune, baron of Semblançay and owner of the hôtel de Beaune-Semblançay, into which the hôtel de Dunois had been incorporated since 1518. The collection of 267 books would thus have been an aristocratic and private library.

With the recent availability of online databases bringing together large quantities of data concerning medieval French literary works, together with references to almost all material witnesses in the form of manuscripts and incunabula, it is now possible to collect more information about the titles listed in the inventory than has previously been the case. This is firstly thanks to the indispensable online database *Jonas* of the French Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – IRHT, which contains details of almost all known medieval manuscripts containing literary texts in French and their variants¹¹. Additional bibliographical in-

⁶ The hôtel de Dunois, later incorporated into the hôtel de Beaune-Semblançay, was entirely destroyed during the Second World War; only a wall facing the courtyard, the fountain, and the chapel are still visible on the Jardin de Beaune-Semblançay.

⁷ François I, count of Dunois, of Longueville, of Tancarville, governor of the Dauphiné, great chamberlain of France, son of the 'Bastard of Orléans', [...] who died on 25 November 1491. CHÉREAU, *Catalogue*, pp. 9-10.

⁸ RUNNALLS, *The Catalogue*.

⁹ WINN, *Antoine Vérard*, pp. 19-20, 25-26.

¹⁰ Suggested by the address alone, because nothing else justifies it. A total conjecture by the author [Chéreau], who does not bring in any evidence. The paper cuttings do not indicate any quantities of books, or an appraisal of their value. CARTON, *L'inventaire*, p. 663, n. 5

¹¹ On the url <http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr>.

formation about medieval literary texts can be found on the website *Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge – Arlima*¹². For early printed editions, the most important search engine is the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue - ISTC*¹³, maintained by the British Library, that contains references to all known incunabula, as well as the *Universal Short Title Catalogue - USTC*¹⁴, the result of research projects into early printed books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, conducted by Andrew Pettegree and the St Andrews Book Group.

As a result of these new resources for research, I propose in this commentary and study to give a new assessment of the inventory of French books in Tours in order to come to more reliable hypotheses concerning the nature of the book collection, the dating of the inventory, and the historical owner(s) and reader(s) of the books. I will base my argument on a study of the inventory from all possible perspectives: the materiality of the historical document, the characteristics of the listed texts, the dating of the texts and the printed editions, as well as the particularities of the phrasing of entries in the catalogue, also in comparison with other book inventories of the same era.

In the second instance, the newly obtained results and my new identification of some of the listed texts will allow for a closer evaluation of the conclusions of Chéreau, Runnalls, Winn, and Carton. Finally, I will argue for a new dating of the inventory (to shortly after 1494) and a new interpretation of its nature: a collection of books in French to read, to copy, to borrow, and possibly for sale from a bookseller, present in the heart of urban life in Tours at the end of the fifteenth century.

This article is a commentary to my transcription of the historical document, reproduced below, as well as to the detailed identification of the listed texts that can be downloaded from the website *Renumar (Ressources numériques pour l'Édition des Archives de la Renaissance)* of the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours¹⁵. The numbers between square brackets refer to the numbers of Chéreau's edition of the booklist.

1. *A study of the inventory of the «livres en françois» in Tours*

The booklist edited by Chéreau is a witness of an impressive collection of books in French that was present in Tours, a mid-size town on the river Loire in the centre of France, the residence of French kings and the administrative capital of the country during most of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth cen-

¹² On the url <http://www.arlima.net>.

¹³ On the url https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search.

¹⁴ On the url <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>.

¹⁵ On the url <http://renumar.univ-tours.fr/>.

tury. As mentioned above, the inventory lists 267 titles, which though already an exceptional number of texts for the late Middle Ages, still does not represent the complete collection: several mentions in the inventory confirm the presence of many other books. As a consequence, the collection must have included even more books than those specified in the inventory. In order to give an impression of the size of the book collection: considering a width of 2 cm on average per volume, the inventory corresponds to more than 5.34 meters of books.

The inventory of «livres en francois escripts a la main a Tours. devant l'ostel monseigneur de Dunois»¹⁶ is preserved on folios 78r to 82v of Manuscript français 2912 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. In the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale this volume is described as «recueil de lettres et de pièces originales, et de copies de pièces»¹⁷ dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The material characteristics of the document pasted into the miscellany Manuscript français 2912 are the following: the palaeographical features of the booklist suggest a dating to around 1500, possibly the early years of the sixteenth century¹⁸. The booklist consists of five small fragments of paper that have been cut from a larger document. The cuttings have been pasted into a collector's album. As the inventory was noted on the recto and verso sides of the paper leaves, the cuttings were pasted into a paper frame so that they can be read from both sides. Since the original order of the inventory was not changed, the pages of the original document must have been folded lengthwise. As a consequence of the cutting, all information about the original historical context is completely lost¹⁹. The binding of the miscellany dates from the seventeenth century and bears the arms of Philippe, count of Béthune (1565-1649) and his son Hippolyte (1603-1665). Father and son were great collectors of historical documents and the album was part of a much larger collection of original documents. Before his death in 1665 Hippolyte had donated this invaluable collection to the French king Louis XIV²⁰.

The other historical documents pasted in the seventeenth century into Manuscript français 2912 mostly date from the fifteenth century²¹. Taken together, the

¹⁶ Handwritten books in French in Tours in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois.

¹⁷ A collection of letters and original documents, and copies of documents.

¹⁸ The inventory is written in a gothic *cursiva*, in use since the fifteenth century. The specific forms of the letters -r and -h could suggest the beginning of the sixteenth century; the letters -c, -e, -t, and -o, on the other hand, present the older forms. AUDISIO - BONNOT-RAMBAUD, *Lire le français d'hier*; BUAT - VAN DEN NESTE, *Dictionnaire*. RUNNALLS, *The Catalogue*, p. 397 describes the writing as «characteristic of the late fifteenth-century».

¹⁹ CARTON, *L'inventaire* has spotted a fragment of a watermark in the original document; see below.

²⁰ BABELON, *Philippe de Béthune*.

²¹ The only exception is a document on folio 66 that is dated 1501.

documents present a certain logic of collecting and presentation, because most of them are related to the French king Louis XI, most notably to the revolts in the town of Bourges in 1474²². Especially the letters signed by the French king himself would have been objects highly desired by the two collectors.

Towards the end of the album the ordering of the collection becomes more random. This is probably the result of later additions. There is no apparent link between the inventory of French books in Tours and the documents preceding and following it:

On folio 69r: «Memoire à mon tres honoré seigneur monseigneur Du Bouchage»²³. The document is not signed and dated. The author, an alderman of Bourges, writes that he cannot accept his nomination as lieutenant of the region of Berry. Monseigneur du Bouchage is Imbert de Batarnay (ca. 1438-1523), chamberlain and councillor of the French kings Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII and François I. Moreover, the first four letters of the album are letters to du Bouchage, signed by Louis XI himself.

On the folios 74r to 75r: a copy of an arrest in Latin issued by Louis XI against the count of Armagnac, concerning the tithes of Conques and Sauveterre, signed at the provincial parliament (a court of law) of Toulouse in December 1466. There are more documents in the album that are related to Jean V, count of Armagnac (1420-1473), who is known for having rebelled against King Louis XI.

The following folios (75v to 77v) were left blank. The collectors probably wanted to leave some space in order to be able to insert more documents.

The inventory of French books in Tours was pasted onto folios 78r to 82v (five leaves; the verso side of folio 82 is blank).

Folio 83 is empty.

On folio 84r (verso side is blank): letter by Antoinette de Contay to «monsieur Du Bouchage», written in Aire-sur-la-Lys on 11 August in which she asks him to request financial support from the king, because she and her husband, the Lord of Gapennes, have lost all their belongings after the conquest of Aire-sur-la-Lys by Louis XI in 1481.

On folio 85r (verso side is blank): a letter written by du Bouchage to Louis XI, written in Saint-Quentin on the 10th of September, without indication of the year, concerning a conflict between the author and Henry de Pompignac over land situated near Castres.

²² RIVAUD, *Les villes et le roi*, pp. 78-86.

²³ A note to my much-honoured lord monseigneur du Bouchage.

On folios 86r to 87v: a document without dating and signature, starting with: «Memoire a monseigneur des choses qui s'ensuivent. Primus, le roy a donne a mondit seigneur les communs de Conques et Sauveterre»²⁴. A conflict, however, remains between monseigneur and the admiral on the collection of the tithes of Naucelle, that belong to the barony of Landorre. The admiral of France is without doubt Louis de Bourbon-Roussillon (1450-1487), baron of Landorre.

The last eight folios of the album are blank.

The common theme uniting almost all documents in the album is first and foremost King Louis XI, and to a lesser degree his chamberlain du Bouchage. The documentary context of the album shows that the collectors Philippe and Hippolyte de Béthune would certainly not have dreamt of including an inventory penned by a bourgeois merchant and librarian from Tours among these documents signed by kings and other highly placed persons. On the contrary, it seems that father and son de Béthune took the booklist from Tours for an inventory from the era of Louis XI, possibly even for an inventory of the books of the king himself, who lived in Tours²⁵. It might be possible that the collectors from the seventeenth century had access to contextual information from the original documents in their complete form that indicated this origin, now lost because the paper was cut and inserted into an album. A link cannot, however, be accepted between the booklist and King Louis XI, because he died in 1483, while several texts mentioned in the inventory were written more than ten years after his death.

It is also possible that it was the mention of «monseigneur de Dunois» that attracted the attention of the collectors and that the father and son de Béthune supposed that it was the inventory of a book collection of one of the counts of Dunois. This was firstly Jean d'Orléans (1403-1468), count of Dunois and Mortain, nicknamed 'the bastard of Orléans', the illegitimate son of Louis d'Orléans, younger brother of King Charles VI, to whom his successor King Charles VII had donated the hôtel in the Grand Rue of Tours shortly after 1449. But since Jean died in 1468, and his son François I^{er} d'Orléans died in 1491, it was most likely his grandson François II (1470-1513), who was count of Dunois at the time the inventory was made²⁶. I will come back to this issue below.

The particularities of the inventory's descriptions and the works listed provide further indications for the provenance and dating of the document. Firstly, the inventory is divided into four sections that comprise different numbers of copies:

²⁴ A note to monseigneur on the following subjects. Firstly, the king has given to my said seigneur the [rights to the tithes] of the commons of Conques and Sauveterre.

²⁵ DELISLE, *Le cabinet*, I, p. 77.

²⁶ For the family tree of Dunois-Longueville, see: POTTER, *A History of France*, p. 373.

1. handwritten books in French («Livres en francois escripts a la main»), more than 165 texts;
2. other books with mystery plays («Aultres livres en mistaires»), 33 texts;
3. morality plays («Moralites»), more than 18 texts;
4. printed books in French («Livres en francois en impression»), more than 28 texts.

It is a mixture of material characteristics (manuscripts and printed editions) and of textual genres (theatre plays and other texts). Within these categories the order of the books occasionally follows a certain logic, which suggests a rudimentary system of classification and retrieval. Next to the four categories mentioned in the inventory, it is above all the size of the books that contributes to their ordering: the first manuscripts mentioned contain long historical texts and *romans* in prose in three or four volumes [1-4], while at the end there are several rhyming texts that contain hardly 1,000 verses [178, 180, 181]. The manuscripts also seem to have been ordered according to literary genres and subjects: in the beginning most notably literary *romans*, *chansons de geste*, historical and classical texts; towards the end above all (but not exclusively) biblical and religious texts. In certain cases there are groups of two or three texts written by the same author or with the same theme, for instance: two texts written by Alain Chartier [82, 83], the *Horloge de sapience*, the *Tresor de sapience*, the *Doctrinal de sapience* [106-108], the *Vie Nostre Seigneur*, the *Passion Nostre Seigneur* [112, 113], three works by Cicero [118-120], five texts about women [125-129], two works attributed to Jean Gerson [154-155], three pilgrim accounts [203-205]²⁷.

Most texts mentioned in the inventory survive in numerous manuscripts, often dozens or more, and in the case of the *Roman de la rose* [56], even 283 manuscripts. The book collection in Tours is composed of texts that were disseminated quite widely at the end of the Middle Ages. There are a few exceptions, however, because seven titles only survive in a single manuscript²⁸, and two printed editions were only printed once²⁹. The percentage of destruction of the texts of theatre plays is particularly high and it is hardly possible to obtain data about their dissemination.

²⁷ Norms for spelling were highly variable during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Where possible I reproduce the spelling of the titles as used in the IRHT database Jonas.

²⁸ *Chronique artésienne* [97], *Nouvelet* [130], *Coutumes de Touraine, d'Anjou et du Maine* [133], Estienne des Arpentis, *Reductoire de l'ame* [138], Robert Gaguin, *Passe-temps de l'oisiveté* [148], Olivier Maillard, *Confession* [176], *les Épitaphes du roi de Sicille* [183].

²⁹ *Les Histoires de Paul Orosee*, Paris: Antoine Vérard, 1491 [240], *l'Art de chevalerie selon Vegece*, Paris: Antoine Vérard, 1488 [259].

The texts and the printed editions mentioned in the inventory provide indications for a fairly reliable dating of the document. The most recently written texts in the inventory are the *Séjour d'honneur* by Octovien de Saint-Gelais [93] that was finished in 1494 and the *Triomphe des dames* written by Olivier de la Marche [143], generally dated to the years 1493-1494. Another textual witness pointing towards these years is the *Moralité de l'homme pécheur* [188], printed by Antoine Vérard between 1494 and 1499 with the detail, «naguères joué en la ville de Tours»³⁰. There is a strong possibility that the text of this morality play mentioned in the inventory has a relation to a staging of this play in Tours around 1494³¹.

There are, however, also a few contradictory details. The booklist mentions the morality play *La chair le monde et le diable* [237], which is usually dated towards 1505, but, as Runnalls has observed, without any documented evidence: it may very well be possible that this play is ten years older than thought³². The oldest textual witness of the mystery play *Saint Laurens* [219] is the edition printed by Antoine Vérard in 1534, but there is nothing that compels us to assume that this is also the year in which the play was written. The survival rate of theatre plays is so low that this textual witness alone is not a reliable proof for a late dating of the inventory. Chéreau suggested that the entry *Arcita et Palamen et la belle Emylia* [38] could refer to the *Roman de Palamon et Arcitat*, written by Anne de Graville around 1521, but it is not necessary to accept this identification of the entry in the booklist, because there is an older version of which he was unaware, written around 1457 for the court of René d'Anjou.

On the other hand, the booklist contains at least 35 manuscripts with a text that was written during the second half of the fifteenth century, twelve of which were even written after 1470³³. Most of the mystery plays and moralities date from the second half of the fifteenth century as well. As far as the printed books are concerned, there is nothing that compels us to suppose that these were printed after 1491, because the work *Histoires de Paul Orose* [240] was only printed once by Vérard that year and all other printed books could have been printed earlier. In addition, several incunabula editions listed in the inventory were never reprinted after the 1480s:

- [243] *Le miroir de la vie humaine*, only printed in Lyon in 1477 and 1482;
- [259] *L'art de chevalerie selon Vegece*, only printed in Paris in 1488;

³⁰ Recently staged in the town of Tours. The only surviving copy is London, British Library, IB. 41213.

³¹ The inventory does not indicate that this is a printed copy. It is possible that it is a now-lost manuscript text.

³² RUNNALLS, *The catalogue*, p. 405.

³³ Numbers 44, 57, 93, 125, 138, 140, 143, 148, 176, 178, 181, 183 of the inventory.

- [262] *Le siège de Rhodes*, only printed in Lyon after 1480 and in Audenaarde in 1482;
- [265] *Mélibée et Prudence*, only printed in Lyon, ca. 1478-1480, in Geneva before 1481 and in Paris ca. 1482-1484;
- [266] *Cy sont les Loys des trespasses*, only printed in Bréhan-Loudéac in 1484/85.

The absence of works written after the beginning of the sixteenth century is also remarkable. For instance, there is not a single text written by authors who were active in the first decades of the sixteenth century, such as Clément Marot, Jean Molinet, Pierre Gringore, Symphorien Champier, Jean Bouchet, or Jean Lemaire de Belges. Also absent are printed editions from the early sixteenth century that were quite widely disseminated, such as the *Fleur des commandemens de Dieu*, printed in Rouen in 1496, and by Antoine Vérard in Paris in 1499³⁴, Pierre Gringore, the *Chasteau de labour*, printed in Paris in 1499³⁵, the *Nef des folles* translated by Jean Drouyn, and printed in Paris shortly after 1500³⁶, and the *Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rhétorique*, first printed by Antoine Vérard in 1502³⁷. All these works were reprinted frequently during the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

The dating of the works mentioned in the inventory, in combination with the absence of texts and printed editions dating from the early sixteenth century, show clearly that recently written texts were regularly added to the book collection of French books in Tours during the fifteenth century and that the acquisition of new books, which still was manifestly frequent during the 1470s and 1480s, suddenly stops after the year 1494. As a consequence, the list of books in French in Tours can be dated fairly reliably to ‘shortly after 1494’.

It is also remarkable that the booklist does not refer to the «hôtel de Dunois», but to the «hôtel of *monseigneur* de Dunois»³⁸. This detail indicates that the inventory must have been made while the owner of the hôtel still was a count of Dunois. Chéreau identified him as François I, count of Dunois until 1491, but this cannot be correct because of the dating of several texts in the inventory to after 1491. During the period that the booklist was likely made, shortly after 1494, the current count was his son François II de Longueville who died in 1513, grandson of the ‘Bastard of Orléans’ and owner of the hôtel in the Grand Rue of Tours.

³⁴ ISTC if00193700, ISTC if00193900.

³⁵ ISTC ig00489100.

³⁶ ISTC ib00005250.

³⁷ ISTC ij00218200.

³⁸ My emphasis. In the official document recording the donation to Jacques de Beaune in 1518 the notaries refer to «l’hostel et maison de Dunoys», without the detail «de monseigneur»; GRANDMAISON, *Notice*, p. 181.

After the death of François II in 1513 it was firstly his daughter Renée, at that moment still a five-year-old child, who received the title of countess of Dunois. When she too died, on 23 May 1515, the hôtel de Dunois and the title count of Dunois went to Louis de Longeville, the younger brother of François II, who died only one year later, on the 1st of August 1516.

As a consequence, it is highly likely that the booklist was made before 1 August 1516, because after this date the hôtel was no longer the property of a monseigneur de Dunois, but of his widow Jeanne de Hochberg and his brother Jean, Cardinal of Longueville, Archbishop of Toulouse (1491-1533), who both sold it shortly afterwards to the queen mother, Louise de Savoie, in 1516-1517. It is also possible that the monseigneur de Dunois mentioned in the inventory was still François II de Longueville, making the date *ante quem* of the booklist in that case 12 February 1513.

Turning now to the nature of the texts in French brought together in Tours at the end of the fifteenth century, five main groups can be distinguished according to their themes or genres:

- 102 (38%) Biblical and religious texts, Christian morals;
- 89 (30%) Literary texts;
- 32 (12%) Encyclopaedic works, didactic and political texts;
- 15 (6%) Translations of texts from Roman and Greek Antiquity;
- 13 (4%) Historical works³⁹.

The inventory opens with a large group of literary texts, *chansons de geste*, vast narrative *romans*, originally composed in Old and Middle French, such as *Tristan en prose* [3], *Lancelot en prose* [4], *Merlin en prose* [15], *Artus de Bretagne* [19], the *Roman de Joseph d'Armatie* [20], *la Queste del saint Graal* [21], *Bueve de Hantone* [26], *Renaut de Montauban* [27], *Barlaam et Josaphat* [47], the *Roman de Mélusine* [74 and 245], *Pierre de Provence et la belle Maguelonne* [96 and 251], *Appolonius de Tyr* [98], and several others. The literary theme of *la belle dame sans merci* (the merciless and beautiful lady) and the courts of love represent another field of interest, with texts in verse and in prose such as Martial d'Auvergne, the *Arrêts d'amour* [60], René d'Anjou, the *Livre du coeur d'amour épris* [86], an art of love with the title *Nouvelet* [130], Alain Chartier, the *Livre des quatre dames* [152], Georges Chastellain, *Outré d'amour* [178], and Aimé de Montfaucon, the *Débat du gris et du noir* [181].

³⁹ These figures are somewhat of an approximation, because a few titles could not be identified and several others could be placed in more than one category.

Translations of texts from Classical Antiquity are present as well, which also testifies to their reception in the Touraine region: the *Decades* of Titus Livius [2], Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* and Lucanus, *Pharsalia* [9 and 240], *Ovide moralisé* [25], the adventures of Alexander the Great according to Quintus Curtius [32], Ovid, *Ars amatoria* [53], Vegetius, *De re militari* [54 and 259], *Placides et Timeo*, modelled after Plato [111], Cicero, *De officiis* [118], *De senectute* [119] and *De amicitia* [120], the *Ethiques* and *Politique* of Aristote [241], and the *Commentarii de bello Gallico* by Julius Cesar [258].

Another textual genre present in the collection of books in Tours is historiography, as attested by several chronicles, such as the *Chroniques* by Jean Froissard [1], Guillaume de Nangis, the *Chronique abrégée des rois de France* [63], the *Chronique de Charles VII roi de France* [77], Vincent de Beauvais, the *Miroir historial*, translated by Jean de Vignay [90], the *Mer des histoires* [239], and a French translation of the *Fasciculus temporum* [248]. Next to these, several encyclopaedic, pragmatic, and didactic texts were incorporated into the collection, such as the encyclopaedic work *Sydrac* [22 and 252], the *Rustican* on agriculture [23], Marco Polo, the *Devisement du monde* [39], the medical work *Régime de Santé* [59], Gaston Phébus, the *Livre de la chasse* [62], Christine de Pizan, le *Livre du Corps de Policie*, a mirror of princes [80], the encyclopaedia written by Brunetto Latini, the *Tresor* [91], the cookbook *Viandier* by Taillevent [145], a work on falconry [146], and Bartholomaeus Anglicus' famous encyclopaedia in French translation, the *Livre des propriétés des choses* [242].

In addition, the inventory of the French books in Tours mentions several works contributing to the debate about women, together with didactical works intended for women: Boccaccio, *Des cleres et nobles femmes* [11], *Le chevalier aux dames* [44 and 125], a translation of the anti-marriage and misogynistic treatise *Liber lamentationum Matheoli* [47], the *Débat entre bouche médisant et femme défendant* on the faults and merits of women [51], the *Roman de la rose* [56 and 254], Christine de Pizan, the *Cité des dames* [126], the *Miroir aux dames* [127], the *Livre de Geoffroi de La Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles* [128], Christine de Pizan, the *Livre des trois vertus*, addressing women from all three estates of society [129]⁴⁰, Olivier de La Marche, the *Triomphe des dames* [143], and the anti-feminist work with the ironical title *Les quinze joyes de mariage* [149].

Notwithstanding the considerable numbers of these categories of texts, biblical, religious, and spiritual works represent by far the largest category of the inventory, especially when the mystery plays and moralities are included. Firstly, the book collection in Tours included parts of the Bible translated into French,

⁴⁰ The latter four texts have been grouped together in the inventory.

together representing almost the entire text of the Bible: a printed edition of the Old Testament in French [246], a manuscript with Revelation in French [105], as well as a Life of Christ and a Passion story, usually following the texts of the Four Gospels closely [112-113]⁴¹. The annual cycle of Epistles and Gospels (*pericopes*) that were usually read in Latin during Sunday's Mass were also available in French: the *Expositions des Évangiles* [117] and the *Miroir de la redemption* [244], of which the French versions also contain the annual cycle of biblical *pericopes*⁴². The collection of books also included two copies of the *Vengeance de Jérusalem*, one of the apocrypha that was considered to be a continuation of the Gospels in the Middle Ages [102 and 264].

Moreover, the booklist mentions several Books of Hours [185] and even the Hours of Our Lady translated into French [169]. More surprising still is the presence of a Missal [24] in French with translations into Middle French of the liturgy and the *pericopes*⁴³. The presence of these biblical and even liturgical texts in French shows that before the condemnation of Bible translations by the theologians of the Sorbonne in 1525, lay people had more freedom to read and use biblical and liturgical books, as well as the prayers of the Divine Office in their own vernacular.

The inventory furthermore includes several texts in Middle French with directions for spirituality, meditation, and contemplation, sometimes of an advanced level, such as Robert le Chartreux, the *Chastel perilleux* [58], St Augustine, *Soliloques* [158], Hugues de Saint-Victor, *De arrha animae* [161] and Henri Suso, *l'Horloge de sapience* [106, 107, and 154]. Other texts were more explicitly intended for a lay audience, such as the *Mendicité spirituelle* [64] and the *Montagne de contemplation* [104], both written by Jean Gerson. There are also spiritual texts that aim to arouse strong emotions, such as compassion with the pains of the suffering Christ, while evoking the lamentations of the Virgin [156 and 168], or the burning love the believer can feel for the Celestial Bridegroom, which is encouraged in a text such as the *Chapelet de virginité* [172]. The elevation of the soul into a union with the Divine and the annihilation of the self are taught in the mystical work the *Miroir des simples âmes anéanties*, written by Marguerite Porete [65], a Beguine from the Hainaut. The author and her work were accused of heresy and burnt at the stake in Paris in 1310, but the text did not disappear, as is testified by its presence in the book collection in Tours⁴⁴.

⁴¹ HOOGVLIET, *Reading the Gospels*.

⁴² ID., *Manual Labour*.

⁴³ HASENOHR, *Entre Bible et liturgie*.

⁴⁴ ID., *The Tradition*.

Catechetical works, instructions for confession, and moral lessons constitute the third group among the religious texts. These are often, but not uniquely, intended for lay people and simple priests. The *Doctrinal aux simples gens* is an example of a catechetical text with an enormous dissemination [108, 136, and 250]. Texts such as the *Somme du Roi* by Frère Laurent [61 and 263], two works on confession by Jean Gerson [155 and 249], and the *Miroir des pecheurs* [167] inform the reader about the vices and virtues, as well as about the rules of the Ten Commandments⁴⁵. Texts designed to impart Christian morals to society, such as the *Doctrinal du temps présent* by Pierre Michault [55 and 247] and the *Livre de bonnes moeurs* de Jacques Legrand, [132, 256, and 107], denounce the wrongs of all classes of society, including the sins committed by members of the clergy. The *Diète du salut* by Pierre de Luxembourg [170] is a collection of practical advice and spiritual directions for the daily life of a young woman living in the world. The religiosity of lay people and their holiness are strongly present in the two Lives of female lay saints mentioned in the inventory, St Catherine of Siena [164] and St Elisabeth of Hungary [165]. The number of texts listed in the inventory addressing women is striking, and it suggests that the collection of books in French was also intended for an audience of female readers.

In this manner the inventory is a witness to the riches of the textual culture of religion in French towards the end of the Middle Ages, as well as the sometimes highly advanced nature of the religious and biblical knowledge that lay people could access.

The texts of theatre plays reveal a similar pattern to that of the manuscripts: a few worldly, literary plays, including the *Destruction de Troyes* [186] and *Griselidis* [200], and some political plays such as the *Moralité d'Arras* by Michault Taillevent [231] and the *Bien public* [232]. The overwhelming majority, however, are plays of a religious nature. There are those inspired by the Bible such as the *Nativité Nostre Seigneur* [214], the *Passion Nostre Seigneur* [187], and the *Mystère de la patience Job* [202]. Furthermore, there are numerous works staging the Lives of Saints [191-198, 207-212, 215, 216, 219], or evoking Christian morals in order to teach good behaviour to the audience, both in relation to themselves and to other classes of society, such as the *Moralité de l'homme pécheur* [188] and the *Mistere du bien advisé et Mal advisé* [201]. The texts of these plays contain the different voices (or roles) of the characters on stage, but they were probably also used as reading texts⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ VAN ENGEN, *Multiple Options*, pp. 280-281.

⁴⁶ WEIGERT, *French Visual Culture*, pp. 78-80.

Looking at the geographical and linguistic origins of the texts mentioned in the inventory from Tours, it is natural that several of them are strongly linked to the town itself, to the Loire Valley, to the West of France, and to French Brittany. This obviously first and foremost concerns the *Coutumes de Touraine, d'Anjou et du Maine* [133], but also the *Jouvencel* (1461-1468) [31] the author of which, Jean de Bueil, originated from the Touraine, and the *Chastel perilleux* (1368) [58], dedicated to a religious woman from Frontevaud Abbey, located near Tours. Other texts have a link to the West of France, such as the romance *Artus de Bretagne* (early fourteenth century) [19] that was written in French Brittany, a *chanson de geste* about Bertrand du Guesclin [34], the *Loys des trespasses* by Jean de Meun, printed in Bréhan-Loudéac in 1484/85, and the *Grande chronique de Normandie* [89]. Two plays are related to Tours as well: the *Moralité de l'homme pécheur* [188], which Vêrard's printed edition suggests was staged there around 1494, and the *Jeu de Sainte Appoline* [196], of which a miniature showing a staging survives, which was painted by Jean Fouquet⁴⁷ who lived and worked in Tours.

Even if most of the texts listed in the inventory from Tours were originally composed in the kingdom of France, it is remarkable that several texts have a close link to the court of Burgundy: the *Traité de la toison d'or* by Guillaume Fillastre [8], inspired by the Burgundian chivalric order with the same name, the *Chroniques de Hainaut* [42], the *Estrif de fortune et de vertu* by Martin le Franc [45], dedicated to Philippe le Bon, the *Doctrinal du temps présent* [55 and 247] by Pierre Michault, also dedicated to the duke of Burgundy, the *Chevalier delibere* [140] and the *Triomphe des dames* [143] written by Olivier de La Marche, active at the Burgundian court, and a text stemming from the theatrical joust (*pas d'armes*) of the *Chevalier à l'arbre d'or* [150], one of the festivities celebrating the marriage of Margaret of York with Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, in 1468.

A few texts present in Tours are translations of works written in other regions of Western Europe. This is above all true of Italy, with several texts written by Giovanni Boccaccio translated into French: *De viris illiustribus* and *De claris mulieribus* [10 and 11], possibly the *Decameron* [14], *Teseida* [38], and *Filostrato* [40]. Next to literary works, the collection of books in Tours also included two religious and spiritual works written in Italy: a translation of the *Fiore di virtù*, written in Italian by friar Tommaso towards the end of the thirteenth century [153 and possibly 263], two French versions of the Latin work *Stimulus amoris*, written by Jacopo da Milano, also towards the end of the thirteenth century [114 and 115], and a translation of the *Liber consolationis et consilii* written in the middle of the thirteenth century by Albertano da Brescia, a lay man, lawyer, and author active in northern Italy [262].

⁴⁷ *Heures d'Étienne Chevalier* (1452-1460), Chantilly, Bibliothèque du musée, MS 71.

Two texts were written by authors from the Iberian Peninsula: the *Livre des anges* [134] or *Llibre dels àngels* (1392), written by the Franciscan friar Francesc Eiximenis, and the *Miroir de vie humaine* [243], originally written in Latin by the Spanish bishop and humanist Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo in 1468.

A spiritual text originating in Germany is the Middle French translation of the *Horologium sapientiae* (ca. 1339), present in Tours in three copies [106, 107, and 154], which is in turn a Latin translation of the *Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit* written by the Dominican friar Heinrich Seuse. Two other religious works were written in regions where Middle Dutch was the main language. This is firstly a French translation of the *Cordiale de quattuor novissimis* [123] written towards 1380-1395 by the procurator of the Order of the Teutonic knights of Utrecht in the Low Countries, Gerard van Vliederveen, and a French translation of the *Speculum aureum animae peccatricis*, written by the Carthusian Jacobus van Gruitrode, prior of All Apostles Charterhouse on Mont Cornillon near Liège [162]⁴⁸.

Finally, there are also texts originating from the British Isles: the *Chronique de la trahison et mort de Richard II roi d'Angleterre* [99], the romance *Ponthus et Sidoine* [68 and 253], an adaptation made in the South-West of France of the Franco-Insular romance *Horn* (XII^e siècle), and *Bueve de Hantone* [26], a translation-adaptation of a Franco-Insular *chanson de geste*.

Although the inventory contains primarily French books, the presence of these translations and adaptations shows that the intellectual and spiritual outlook was not directed inwards to the Touraine or the kingdom of France alone, but that the interest was also extended towards other Francophone regions, such as the duchy of Burgundy, and even towards other linguistic and cultural regions of late medieval Europe, such as Italy, Spain, Germany, the Low Countries, and the British Isles.

Turning now to the printed books listed in the Tours inventory, Chéreau observed earlier that the bookseller must have collaborated closely with the printer Antoine Vérard from Paris: «Il y a [...] tant de ces livres imprimés par Vérard, que notre libraire doit avoir été ou l'un de ses voyageurs ou l'un de ses correspondants»⁴⁹. As mentioned above, Runnalls and Winn have followed Chéreau's conclusions and have actually retraced two booksellers in Tours who did have a commercial collaboration with Vérard: Jean Sassin and Thibaud Bredin. However, Runnalls and Winn were not able to relate these two booksellers to the exact

⁴⁸ For translations of religious texts from Middle Dutch to Middle French, see: DLABAČOVÁ - HOOGVLIET, *Religieuze literatuur*. For translations of Gruitrode's works, see: GAENS, *Spiritu Jesu operante*.

⁴⁹ There are so many books printed by Vérard that our bookseller must have been either one of his pedlars or one of his agents. CHÉREAU, *Catalogue*, p. 61.

location in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois in the Grand Rue of Tours.

Even if Antoine Vérard had embarked on commercial activities in the town of Tours, in reality it is necessary to suppose the involvement of the Parisian printer for only five editions mentioned in the inventory:

- [240] *Les Histoires de Paul Orose*, Paris: [Pierre Le Rouge], for Antoine Vérard, 1491;
- [241] *Les ethiques en francoys*, Paris: [Antoine Caillaut and Guy Marchant, for Antoine Vérard], 1488; *Le livre de politiques; Yconomique*, Paris: [Antoine Caillaut and Guy Marchant], for Antoine Vérard, 1489;
- [252] *La Fontaine de toutes sciences*, Paris: [Pierre Levet], for Antoine Vérard, 1486/8; Paris: Antoine Vérard, [between 1495 and 1497];
- [258] *Les Guerres des Gaules*, [Paris: Antoine Caillaut?, for Antoine Vérard, after 1486]; Paris: [Pierre Le Caron, for] Antoine Vérard, 1488; Paris: Antoine Vérard, [between 1499 and 1503];
- [259] *L'art de chevalerie selon Vegece*, Paris: [Antoine Caillaut? for] Antoine Vérard, 1488.

As Vérard was a highly active printer and editor, it is not surprising that he too printed several other titles that figure in the inventory, but it is not necessary to suppose that he was actually the printer of all the other copies of the Tours inventories (except the five titles mentioned above), because there are numerous alternatives: other printers in Paris, such as Jean Petit and Jean Trepperel, several printers in Lyon (very active in the long-distance sale of their editions), Geneva, Rouen, and Bréhan-Loudéac and at Lantenac Abbey in French Brittany, Colard Mansion in Bruges, and Arend de Keyser in Oudenarde.

A remarkable detail of the way in which the printed books were noted in the inventory is that no numbers of copies are provided, which suggests strongly that there was only one copy of each title mentioned in the inventory. If the bookseller in Tours were Vérard's agent, as has been suggested, he would have instead had several copies, because provincial booksellers who sold printed books usually had several dozens of copies in stock. For instance, in 1508 the Tours bookseller Jean Sassin owed Antoine Vérard for a delivery of 37 copies of the *Coutumier de Touraine*⁵⁰. Another example is the bookseller Jehan Leurens, active in Amiens, who was accused in 1509 of not having paid the amount of 28 *livres* and 2 *sous* to the printer Martin Morin from Rouen for his supplies of books (printed by Morin himself, as well as other printers). The list of books shows that

⁵⁰ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/23 (21/12/1509); WINN, *Antoine Vérard*, pp. 25, 465-466.

Leurens had received 1,242 books in total: several hundred Books of Hours, books in Latin, as well as books in French, such as 12 copies of the *Épître Othéa* by Christine de Pizan [100], 39 copies of *Robert le diable*, 6 copies of the *Chapelet des vertus*, 18 of the *Chapelet de Jésus et de la Vierge*, 24 of the *Lucidaire* [163 and 260], and so forth⁵¹. As the inventory shows that the collection of books in Tours only included one copy of each printed book, it is logical to conclude that the bookseller specialised in the second-hand book market. That is to say: if he was actually a bookseller. In order to find the beginning of a reply to that question, it is necessary to turn to the arguments provided by Colette Carton.

2. Colette Carton: *The 1527 inventory of goods confiscated from Jacques de Beaune?*

As mentioned in the introduction, Colette Carton was correctly criticising the unfounded conclusion that the list of French books in Tours would have been an inventory of the stock of a bookseller dating from the end of the fifteenth century. In the same article, Carton proposed replacing it with a very different hypothesis: The list would have been part of an inventory of the goods confiscated in 1527 from Jacques de Beaune, baron of Semblançay, who was responsible for the finances of France, after his condemnation for the misappropriation of funds. In short, Carton proposed the following reasoning:

1. most of the books mentioned in the inventory from Tours were originally part of the library of Charlotte de Savoie (1441/3-1483), Queen of France and spouse of Louis XI, who was known to have been a great lover of books and who died on 1 December 1483. Her movable goods, including the books of her library, were transported from Amboise to Tours in order to be inventoried and valued by notaries in the hôtel of sire Jehan Briçonnet;
2. the inventory of the possessions of Charlotte de Savoie mentions 110 identifiable books, 41 of which also figure in the inventory made in Tours in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois;
3. one of the three executors of Charlotte de Savoie's will was François I de Longueville, count of Dunois and owner of the hôtel de Dunois in Tours. His spouse, Agnès de Savoie, was the sister of the deceased queen Charlotte. Agnès probably inherited the majority of her sister's books. Colette Carton supposes that this was the reason why Charlotte de Savoie's books entered into the library of the hôtel de Dunois in Tours;

⁵¹ LABARRE, *Le livre*, pp. 337-341. Amiens, Archives Communales, FF 33, feuillet 53.

4. some other books would have been donated by Louis XI to the library of the hôtel de Dunois. This would have been the reason why the king would have given the order in 1480 to two notaries of Tours to make a (now lost) inventory of some of the king's books in the castle of Plessis-lès-Tours («estants au Plessis du Parc lez Tours»);
5. after the death in August 1516 of Louis d'Orléans, count of Longueville (second son of François I de Longueville), Louise de Savoie, mother of the French king François I^{er}, acquired the hôtel de Dunois in the Grand Rue of Tours. Colette Carton supposes that the widow of Louis d'Orléans, Jeanne de Hochberg, who had sold her half of the hôtel de Dunois to Louise de Savoie, would have left her books behind in the hôtel after she had moved out;
6. on 14 February 1518, Louise de Savoie donated the hôtel de Dunois to Jacques de Beaune, who already owned two neighbouring hôtels⁵². Colette Carton supposes that along with the hôtel de Dunois, Louise de Savoie donated the movable goods and the library present there;
7. the inventory of the books in Tours would have been made in October 1527, as part of the liquidation of the possessions of Jacques de Beaune by the «commission de la Tour carrée» after his fall into disgrace. The public auction of his movable goods in Amboise and Tours between 16 September 1527 and 15 January 1528 would explain the spatial precision expressed by «devant l'ostel monseigneur de Dunois»⁵³. It is also possible that the list represents an inventory of his goods confiscated by François I^{er} and Louise de Savoie. However, this last hypothesis does not explain the detail concerning the location of the books;
8. the watermark of the paper on which the inventory was written is traceable to between 1494 and 1550. Paper with a variant of this watermark was used for other documents written in the centre of France during the 1520s. According to Carton, the writing of the inventory would be in all aspects similar to that of the years of the lawsuit⁵⁴;
9. Philippe, count of Béthune, and his son Hippolyte are descendants of Raoulette de Beaune, a younger sister of Jacques de Beaune, which would explain the presence of the inventory in their collection of historical documents.

The documentation collected by Colette Carton is very rich, but her hypothesis that the inventory was made in 1527 as part of the liquidation of the possessions

⁵² For the act, see: GRANDMAISON, *Notice*.

⁵³ CARTON, *L'inventaire*, p. 678.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 677. For the watermarks see also note 56 below.

of Jacques de Beaune is based on several unfounded presuppositions and in reality, there are several substantial gaps in the documentary support:

- Firstly, Charlotte de Savoie died in 1483, while the inventory from Tours includes a substantial number of works that were written and printed after that year.
- There is no proof at all that Agnès de Savoie inherited the books of her sister Charlotte de Savoie (3)⁵⁵.
- The 41 titles that figure in both inventories survive in several manuscripts (often several dozens) and the correspondence between them does not prove anything, especially because there are 227 remaining titles that only occur in the inventory from Tours. Moreover, the library of Charlotte de Savoie does not explain the presence of more than 52 theatre plays (2).
- The integration of books owned by Agnès de Savoie into a library in the hôtel de Dunois is purely hypothetical. In fact, there are no historical sources at all that would allow us to assume the presence of a library in the hôtel de Dunois (3).
- The donation of books by Louis XI to the library in the hôtel de Dunois is another hypothesis without any historical documentation to support it (4).
- There is no proof that the widow of François II de Longueville would have left her movable goods and her books in the hôtel de Dunois after she had sold it to Louise de Savoie (5).
- There is no proof that Louise de Savoie donated the hôtel de Dunois to Jacques de Beaune together with movable goods and books present there (6).
- There is no historical source to substantiate the claim that inventories were made of Jacques de Beaune's movable goods and books in his hôtel in Tours during the auction of his possessions (7).
- Paper with the same watermark as that of the inventory of books in Tours was actually used during a much longer period, between 1478 and 1550⁵⁶. As stated above, the handwriting probably dates from the end of the fifteenth century or the early years of the sixteenth century. In any case, the palaeographical characteristics do not justify the dating of the inventory to a time frame limited to the years 1527-1528 (8).

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 671. Carton suggests that Louise de Savoie could also have inherited the books of Charlotte de Savoie, her aunt. Even if this were true, Louise de Savoie donated the hôtel de Dunois to Jacques de Beaune only a few months after its acquisition and it does not seem likely that she would have stored the books of her aunt there only in order to leave them behind after the donation.

⁵⁶ BRIQUET - SIMMONS - STEVENSON, *Les filigranes*, n. 13365: Decizes, 1494-1497. Var. simil.: Bayonne, 1478/1550; Clermont-Ferrand, 1495-1513; Montpellier, 1496; Orléans, 1505; Caen, 1507; Argences, 1507-09; Tours, 1513; Châteaudun, 1519; Vézélins, 1525; Nantes, 1531.

- As indicated in the previous section, the titles of the inventory of books in Tours all date from before 1494. There is a complete absence of books written or printed after that year, which is difficult to reconcile with a dating of the inventory to 1527.

Consequently, Carton's hypotheses concerning the dating to 1527 and the identification of the owner with Jacques de Beaune should be abandoned, but her critique of the widely accepted idea that the list is the inventory of a bookseller's shop is still valid.

3. *A hub for reading in French*

The question is now to determine whether the inventory of French books in Tours was that of a bookseller's shop or of the private library of an unknown bibliophile. Part of the answer can be found in the inventory itself. Firstly, the inventory mentions 21 titles of which there are two, or even three copies⁵⁷. The presence of a few doubles is imaginable for a private library, but the large number of 21 texts that occur twice in the inventory indicates a bookshop instead.

Moreover, the inventory of books in Tours is a list of available texts, rather than an enumeration of books and their material aspects. For instance, the inventory does not provide any codicological information concerning the support (paper or parchment), the writing (*textura* or *cursiva*), decoration, illustrations, the presence of bindings and clasps, or the value of the books. The only exceptions are the first four entries of the inventory, of which is noted that they consist of three or four volumes. Inventories of private libraries usually use other descriptive formulas than those of the list of books in Tours. For instance, an inventory made in 1427 of the books of Charles d'Orléans in Blois gives very detailed descriptions:

«Une Bible translâtée en françois, neufve, historiée, à lettre de forme et à grans lettres et nombres d'or.

Ung Ovide Metamorphoses, en françois de lettres courant, rimé, couvert de veloux noir; et le dit livre tout neuf à deux fermaulx semblans d'argens dorés, esmailliés aux armes de mon seigneur d'Orléans»⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ Indicated with an asterisk in the transcription below.

⁵⁸ A Bible translated into French, new, illustrated, written in *textura* letter and with initials and numbers in gold. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in French verse, written in ordinary letters, covered with black velvet; and said book is new with two similar clasps of gilded silver, with the arms of monseigneur d'Orléans in enamel. LE ROUX DE LINCY, *La Bibliothèque*, pp. 9-10.

Not only the books owned by the high aristocracy were usually described in this manner. In Paris a similar terminology was used when referring to the books of citizens. For instance, the post-mortem inventory made in 1499 after the death of Marie Turquan, wife of Nicole Gilles, notary and secretary of the king, describes their books in detail together with an appraisal of their value:

«Les cronicques de France en parchemin en grant volume et lettre d'impression non relyées, 6 l.

Deux volumes en papier non reliez escriptz en lettre d'impression de Josephus, faisant mencion de la bataille judaïque, 24 s. [...]»⁵⁹.

There is another difference: The inventory of books in Tours only mentions texts in one volume, while miscellany manuscripts are regularly mentioned in inventories of private libraries. This can be seen in an example from the 1499 inventory of the books of Marie Turquan and her husband Nicole Gilles:

«Ung gros livre contenant Chaton en françois et aultres petiz volumes, Le livre de Matheolus, Le mirouer de l'ame pécheresse, et aultres petiz volumes reliez ensemble»⁶⁰.

Moreover, a book collection bringing together a total of 267 listed books and several others which are alluded to is truly exceptional for the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Marie Turquan and Nicole Gilles in Paris, for instance, owned no more than 64 books in 1499. Other lay lawyers in Paris owned more books, but not the number that was found in Tours. For instance, Jean Bodin, procurator at the parliament of Paris (a court of law), and his wife Philippe owned 176 books according to the 1508 inventory⁶¹ and Antoine Robert, bourgeois of Paris and secretary of the king, owned 125 books in 1521⁶².

Even most members of the high aristocracy did not own as many books: Charles d'Orléans kept 80 titles in the château de Blois according to the 1427 inventory⁶³. The libraries of the richest members of the court of Burgundy did not include such a large number of books either: Philippe de Clèves (1456-1528) had

⁵⁹ The *Chroniques de France* in parchment and large volumes in printed letters and without binding, 6 livres. Two volumes of unbound paper written in printed letters by Josephus, mentioning the *Bataille judaïque*, 24 sous. DOUCET, *Les bibliothèques*, pp. 83-89.

⁶⁰ A large volume containing Cato in French, and other small volumes, the *Livre de Matheolus*, the *Mirouer de l'ame pécheresse*, and other small volumes bound together. *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁶¹ COYECQUE, *La Bibliothèque*. For, more data about the number of books in private collections, see: HASENOHR, *L'essor*, pp. 324-343.

⁶² LE CLECH-CHARTON, *La spiritualité*.

⁶³ LE ROUX DE LINCY, *La Bibliothèque*.

173 volumes and Louis de Gruuthuse, or de Bruges (ca. 1427-1492) had collected 147 titles in 190 volumes⁶⁴.

The impressive total number of 267 books is only surpassed by the great bibliophile and brother of the French king, Jean de Berry (1340-1416), who owned a total of 297 books⁶⁵, the dukes of Burgundy, whose inventories account for 878 books in 1469 and 546 books in 1478⁶⁶ and the library of the Louvre in Paris that included 971 titles according to the inventory made in 1413 by Jean Le Bègue⁶⁷. If the inventory of books in Tours would have been that of a private collection, it must have been a princely or even a royal library. However, in that case it would have been logical to note the name of such a high-ranking owner in the inventory itself.

The inventory of French books in Tours contains several items announcing the presence of even more texts:

- [183bis] *Et plusieurs aultres en grand nombre.*
- [185] *Et plusieurs aultres Heures de tous usages.*
- [238] *Et plusieurs aultres moralites et farces.*
- [267] *Et plusieurs aultres petits traicties.*

These entries are closer to a commercial advertisement than an assessment of value in a post-mortem inventory. Moreover, a private owner would not have accumulated numerous Books of Hours of 'all uses' (*Heures de tous usages*); this sounds more like a bookseller trying to attract the widest range of possible buyers.

We have already seen that it is very likely that the list is a document from a bookseller specialising in second-hand books. Geneviève Hasenohr has previously suggested that the bookseller in Tours had the books of the inventory «disponible pour des copies à la demande»⁶⁸. This is a very interesting suggestion, because Herman Brinkman has discovered similar documentation about the public writer and bookseller Jan de Clerc, active in Ghent around 1400. In the year 1402, Jan bought a collection of around thirty books from Margriete sVriends, sister in the hospital of Ypres, for the relatively high price of 44 and a half *livres*. References to these books in other archival documents show that these were literary and religious texts and that Jan lent them on a daily basis in

⁶⁴ WIJSMAN, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 356, 296.

⁶⁵ DELISLE, *Recherches*, II, pp. 217-270.

⁶⁶ WIJSMAN, *Luxury Bound*, p. 147.

⁶⁷ DELISLE, *Recherches*, I, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁸ Available for copies on demand. HASENOHR, *Entre Bible et liturgie*, p. 132, n. 39.

exchange for money («diemen daghelix verhuert»), in order to be copied or to be read. Another initiative in Ghent was that of Everaert Taybaert, the town's poet, who rented a room opposite the bookshop of Jan de Clerc, where he read texts aloud for an audience and where texts could be read by his clients⁶⁹.

As the collection of books in French in Tours was most likely composed of second-hand books, there is a strong possibility that these books were available for being read, copied, borrowed, and possibly sold, just as they were from de Clerc and Taybaert in Ghent. The presence of more than 52 theatre plays might very well confirm this hypothesis. Even if these were used as reading texts in this period, the texts were also necessary for copying the roles of the actors. For instance, in 1500 the aldermen from Amiens paid a wage to Pierre Martin, procurator in the ecclesiastical court of law «pour avoir escript et billete la iii.^e journee de ladite Passion a grant dilligence ou il y avoit viiii. mille lignes»⁷⁰. In order to be able to copy the actors' roles, Pierre Martin must have had a document that served as his example. In Tours the place where theatre texts were to be found was, obviously, the collection of French books in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois.

This latter spatial indication refers to a specific location in the town of Tours: in the Grand Rue, a bustling road with artisan's shops and one of the principal travel axes of the town, at the entry to the Rue Neuve where wealthy and literate clients were living in large city residences. Moreover, this place was very close to the public school run by the monks of Saint-Julien⁷¹. At present there are no longer houses facing the location of the hôtel de Dunois, but cadastral plans from the eighteenth century show that three houses were built against the south wall of Saint-Julien, next to the main entrance to the church.

This position immediately adjacent to the abbey and church of Saint-Julien is similar to the location of copyists and booksellers near cathedrals, collegiate churches and schools elsewhere in France and in Flanders. In Paris the production and sale of manuscript books in French was concentrated in the Rue Neuve, on the île de la Cité and leading to the square in front of Notre-Dame cathedral⁷². In Amiens copyists and booksellers privileged a similar location for their activities: the square in front of the cathedral and wooden booths (*logettes*) outside the cathedral⁷³. In Bruges the booths of copyists and booksellers were located in the

⁶⁹ BRINKMAN, *Het Comburgse handschrift*, pp. 102-108.

⁷⁰ For having copied and distributed the third day of said Passion with great patience where there were eight thousand lines. Amiens, Archives Communales, BB19, f. 3.

⁷¹ CHEVALIER, *La ville de Tours*, p. 507.

⁷² ROUSE - ROUSE, *Illiterati et uxorati*, pp. 11-49.

⁷³ LABARRE, *Les maîtres écrivains*; NASH, *Between France and Flanders*, pp. 41-45.

claustrum of the collegiate church St Donatus (*Sint Donaaskerk*), the same place where the printer Colard Mansion rented a space from the canons for his printing workshop and bookshop⁷⁴.

The place in Tours in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois corresponds to the preferred location of copyists and booksellers elsewhere. The booklist most likely represents the inventory of a bookseller specialising in second-hand books. As mentioned above, Runnalls and Winn have suggested that he was the bookseller Jean Sassin or Thibault Bredin, respectively, who collaborated with the Parisian printer Antoine Vérard. However, it is not possible to localise either of their businesses at the precise spot indicated by the inventory: in the Grand Rue and the parish of Saint-Saturnin. The house that Bredin sold to Vérard was located in the rue de la Scellerie (now the rue des Halles) in the parish of Saint-Hilaire⁷⁵.

Aside from Sassin and Bredin, in the period leading up to 1505 there were many other booksellers, printers, bookbinders, and copyists active in the book market in Tours, as can be seen in the notarial archives of the town and other historical documents⁷⁶:

1. Jehan Labbé, bookbinder (1458-1459)⁷⁷;
2. Jehan Gardel, copyist, rue de la Scellerie (15th century)⁷⁸;
3. Regnault Fillole/Feillote, copyist, rue de la Scellerie, parish of Saint-Hilaire (1465)⁷⁹;
4. Tugdual Gaultier, copyist, bookseller of second-hand books (1474)⁸⁰;
5. Jehan Bouguer, copyist specialising in gothic textura and bookbinder (1481)⁸¹;

⁷⁴ DE WITTE, *Schrijven*; ID., *Boek- en bibliotheekwezen*; HAUWAERTS - DE WILDE - VANDAMME - ADAM, *Colard Mansion*.

⁷⁵ WINN, *Antoine Vérard*, p. 25.

⁷⁶ Most of these data concerning booksellers and artisans active in the production of books have been collected thanks to the online database *Renumar*: <http://renumar.univ-tours.fr/>. I am greatly indebted to David Rivaud for having shared the data reproduced below. For reasons of brevity, only the oldest known occurrence will be given here. David Rivaud and I are preparing a detailed mapping of places of reading and of the book economy in Tours around 1500.

⁷⁷ Order of two song books by Charles VI; PROST, *Documents*, p. 28.

⁷⁸ Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 2128, last folio: «Explicit le livre des troys vertuz a l'enseignement des dames, escript par les mains de Jehan Gardel, demourant a Tours en la rue de la Sellerie, serviteur de madite dame».

⁷⁹ Tours, Archives Municipales, BB 11 (*état du guet*).

⁸⁰ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/2, 04/03/1474. Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 438, f. 71r: receipt signed by Tugdual Gaultier, bookseller in Tours, for the sale of a used manuscript on 18 March 1480.

⁸¹ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E8/285, 07/07/1481.

6. Richard Beaugendre, copyist specialising in gothic textura, parish of Saint-Venand (1485)⁸²;
7. Joannes Guimbelet, copyist (1487)⁸³;
8. Gacian Pouet, copyist, parish of Saint-Vincent (1490)⁸⁴;
9. Robert Charlot, bookseller, Grand Rue(?) (1490)⁸⁵ ;
10. Jehan Thomas, printer (1490)⁸⁶;
11. Pierre le Sourt, bookseller (1491)⁸⁷;
12. Mathieu Lateron, printer, rue de la Scellerie, near the parish church of Saint-Vincent (1492)⁸⁸;
13. Simon Pourcelet, printer, «in intersignio Pellicani»: a house with the signboard of the Pelican in the Grand Rue, now 48, rue Colbert (1494)⁸⁹;
14. Jehan Ternon, bookseller (1496)⁹⁰;
15. Jehan du Liège, bookseller, in the rue de la Scellerie, near the Augustinians (*en la rue de la Sellerie a lymage de saint Iehan l'Evangeliste pres des Augustins*) (1496)⁹¹;
16. André Lepicquart, manuscript painter, confesses to owing 16 *sols* to Olivier Robin, copyist, «because of loan and sale of books» (*a cause de prest et de vendition de librayrie*) (1497)⁹²;
17. Jehan Riveron, copyist (1497)⁹³;
18. Jehan Lefort, bookseller, in front of the cathedral of Tours (*vis à vis l'église de Tours*) (1499)⁹⁴;
19. Robert Queru, copyist (1501)⁹⁵;
20. Jehan Richart, bookseller, printer (1504)⁹⁶;

⁸² Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E8/288, 08/06/1485.

⁸³ GRANDMAISON, *Documents*, p. 284.

⁸⁴ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/3, 23/09/1490.

⁸⁵ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1, 28/01/1490: a transaction between the bookseller Robert Charlot and Anthoine de Troyes, saddle maker, concerning a house in the Grand Rue, but it is not clear if Charlot actually occupied the house.

⁸⁶ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1, 03/06/1490.

⁸⁷ PROST, *Documents*, pp. 84-85.

⁸⁸ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/4, 19/04/1492. See AQUILON, *L'art typographique*.

⁸⁹ *Breviarium Sancti Martini Turonensis*, Tours: Simon Pourcelet, 1494 (Paris, BnF, VELINS-2871). For the house with the signboard of the Pelican, see: ESQUIEU - PESEZ, *Cent maisons médiévales*, no. 44.

⁹⁰ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E8/291, 08/10/1496.

⁹¹ *La vie de Saint Martin avec ses miracles*, Tours: Mathieu Latheron for Jean de Liège, 7 May 1496.

⁹² Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E8/291, 08/02/1497.

⁹³ GRANDMAISON, *Documents*, pp. 43-44.

⁹⁴ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/5, 19/01/1499.

⁹⁵ Tours, Archives Municipales, CC reg. 53; 18/01/1501.

⁹⁶ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/19, 03/12/1504.

21. Simon Cantin, printer (1505)⁹⁷;
22. Mathieu Pouet (son of Gacien Pouet, see above), bookseller, parish of Saint-Vincent (1505)⁹⁸;
23. Jehanne Poncte, (widow of Regnault Fillole, see above), bookseller, rue de la Scellerie, parish of Saint-Hilaire (died 1505)⁹⁹.

These data show that the book market in Tours must have been well-provided around 1500. There was at least one bookseller who sold second hand books (Tugdual Gaultier) and one who lent books (Olivier Robin). The printing workshop and bookshop of the ephemeral Simon Pourcelet was located one hundred meters to the east of the hôtel de Dunois, which does show that there were at least some activities in the production and sale of books in this area of the town. Unfortunately, the data reproduced above do not allow us to locate a bookseller or artisan in the production of books at the exact position in the Grand Rue in front of the hôtel de monseigneur de Dunois. To the contrary, it seems that most booksellers, printers, and copyists were concentrated in the rue de la Scellerie¹⁰⁰. However, this does not preclude the possibility that one of them had a bookshop or a booth on the premises of the abbey of Saint-Julien in the Grand Rue.

At this moment it is not possible to give a conclusive answer to the question of whether the inventory of French books in Tours represents a bookshop or a private library. However, in the end this question might not be as important as it may seem, because the so-called private libraries were often open to external readers, both male and female, and the owners of the books would often lend them. Geneviève Hasenohr has pointed earlier to this mentality that was very open to lending books¹⁰¹. The fact is, during the Middle Ages and the early sixteenth century, libraries and books were often made accessible for a 'common profit'¹⁰².

This practice was not unheard of in Tours, because the library of Saint-Gatien cathedral was also open to readers other than the canons¹⁰³. Members of the nobility, too, shared the books from their libraries with less fortunate readers. For instance, the 1405 post-mortem inventory of the movable goods belonging to the late Marguerite de Flanders, spouse of Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy, shows that several of her books were in the houses of inhabitants of Arras: a large book about Godefroy of Bouillon and the conquest of Jerusalem together with a Book

⁹⁷ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/20, 10/12/1505.

⁹⁸ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/19, 18/02/1505.

⁹⁹ Tours, Archives Départementales, 3E1/20, 17/09/1505.

¹⁰⁰ See CHEVALIER, *La ville de Tours*, pp. 505-507.

¹⁰¹ HASENOHR, *L'essor*, p. 301; DOLBEAU, *Les usages*, pp. 539-541.

¹⁰² CORBELLINI - HOOGLIET, *Late Medieval Urban Libraries*.

¹⁰³ CHEVALIER, *La ville de Tours*, p. 508.

of Hours in French and Flemish in the house of Jehan du Pont, and the wife of Huart Waloys had several Gospels on parchment in the form of lozenges and a small book about St Margaret in the form of lozenges with silver clasps¹⁰⁴. In the Loire Valley, the royal library in the château de Blois was to a certain extent open to public, and even a register of loans has survived.¹⁰⁵ Even if the inventory of French books in Tours was that of a private library, the inhabitants of the town undoubtedly had access to this enormous collection of books in French, which must have been a hub for reading located in the heart of urban life.

4. Conclusion

A fragmented paper document containing an inventory of more than 267 books in French, without a date, without a name, and completely cut from its material context, can still provide answers about its origin and its historical function. The identification of almost all texts listed has shown that the collection of books was frequently enriched with new books during the 1470s and 1480s, but that no new texts were added after 1494. The nature of the texts — literary, historical, pragmatic, but above all religious and biblical — is a witness to the riches of the textual culture and the free access to religious and biblical knowledge in French during the long fifteenth century, before the first beginnings of the Reformation in the 1520s. The particularities of the descriptions of the titles show that the booklist is probably not the inventory of a private library, and since the collection only contains a single copy of all printed books, it is probably not the stock of an agent of a printer either, but rather that of a bookseller specialising in second-hand books. Even though the owner of the books is not mentioned, the spatial indication «in Tours in front of the hôtel of monseigneur de Dunois», that is, next to the southern and main entrance to the church of Saint-Julien, is similar to the privileged location of other producers and sellers of books at the end of the Middle Ages. The conclusion that the list is an inventory of the stock of a bookseller of second-hand books is not entirely certain, but even if it was a private library, the books in French were probably available to read, to copy, or to borrow. More precise answers may be provided by future research, allowing us to identify one or more books mentioned in the inventory, or to localise booksellers and book producers in Tours around 1500.

¹⁰⁴ «i. grant livre de Godefroy de Buillon de la conqueste de Jherusalem»; «Unes heures en flameng et en franchois évaluée vi. s.» in the hands of Jehan du Pont; «en la garde a la femme Huart Waloys», «plusieurs euvangillez en parchemin en fourme de losenges»; «i. petit livret de Ste Margre a fourme de losenge garni d'argent»; DE WINTER, *La bibliothèque*, pp. 172-174.

¹⁰⁵ BLOCH, *La formation*, pp. 425, 428.

APPENDIX

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 2912, ff. 78r-82v¹⁰⁶.

Illustrations available in

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10720652f/f96.image.r=français%202912>

f. 78r

Livres en françois escripts a la main a Tours, devant l'ostel monseigneur de Dunois.

Premierement

- [1] Les quatre volumes Froissart.
- [2] Titus Liviut en trois volumes.
- [3] Tristan en trois volumes.
- [4] Lancelot du Lac en trois volumes.
- [5] Josephus.
- [6] L'abreviateur des histoires.
- [7] Les passages d'oultre mer.
- [8] Le second volume de la toison d'or.
- [9*] Orose/Lucain.
- [10] Bocace des hommes.
- [11] Bocace des femmes.
- [12] Le mignon.
- [13] Le songe du vergier.
- [14] Les cent nouvelles.
- [15] Merlin.
- [16] Les prophecies Merlin.
- [17] Le recueil des histoires de Troyes.
- [18] Hercules.
- [19] Le petit Artus en deux volumes.
- [20] Josephes du saint greal.
- [21] La queste du saint greal.
- [22] Sidrach.
- [23] Le rusticain.
- [24] Le messel en françois.
- [25] Methamorphose.
- [26] Beufves d'Anthonne.
- [27] Regnault de Montauban.

¹⁰⁶ The inventory is reproduced here in diplomatic transcription that respects as much as possible the original document. Only the following has been added: apostrophes in order to facilitate reading; -u has been replaced by -v where necessary; abbreviations have been resolved: nasalisation signs replaced by -n or -m; apostrophes replaced by -re or -ur; barred -p by -per; chlr by *chevalier*; st by *Saint*; Jhrml by *Jherusalem*; nre sgr by *Nostre Seigneur*; lrs by *lettres*; chun by *chacun*; xpiens by *chrestiens*. Names of persons are written starting with a capital letter, even if the original is different.

- [28] Maugis.
- [29] Cleriadus et Meliadice.
- [30] Aigres de Romme.

f. 78v

- [31] Le jovencel.
- [32] Quinte Curce.
- [33] Les trois fils de roy.
- [34] Bertran du Glaiquin.
- [35] Le petit Tristan.
- [36] Les stratagemmes Frontin.
- [37] Ferrant de Portugal.
- [38] Arcita et Palamen et la belle Emylia.
- [39] Marc Poul.
- [40] Troylus.
- [41] Huon de Bourdeaulx.
- [42] Croniques de Belges.
- [43] L'arquemye d'amours.
- [44*] Le chevalier aux dames.
- [45] L'estrif de fortune.
- [46] Les cent balades.
- [47] Matheolus.
- [48] Balaam et Josaphat.
- [49] L'ymaginacion du chevalier.
- [50] Le chevalier au cisne.
- [51] Bouche medisant et femme defendant.
- [52] Le debat du lyon et du goupil.
- [53] Ovide d'amer.
- [54*] Vegece de chevalerie.
- [55*] Le doctrial de la court.
- [56*] Le romant de la roze.
- [57] Le rosier des guerres.
- [58] Le chasteau perilleux.
- [59] Le regime de sante.
- [60] Les arrests damours.
- [61*] La somme le roy.
- [62] Phebus.
- [63] Cronicques de France abregees.

f. 79r

- [64] Le livre de mandicite spirituelle.
- [65] Le myrouer des simples ames aneanties.
- [66] La destruction de Troyes.
- [67] Alixandre.
- [68*] Ponthus.
- [69] L'arbre des batailles.
- [70] Le jeu des eschecs.

- [71] Guerin de Monglene.
- [72] Berthe au grant pie.
- [73] Paris et Vienne.
- [74*] Melusine.
- [75] Les merveilles du monde.
- [76] Le petit Saintre.
- [77] Croniques du roi Charles vij^{me}.
- [78] Olivier de Castille.
- [79] Galian le restore.
- [80] Le corps de policie.
- [81] Floriant de Scecille.
- [82] L'esperance maistre Alain.
- [83] Le quadrilogue maistre Alain.
- [84] L'orateur de France.
- [85] Le duc Florimont.
- [86] La conqueste de douce mercy.
- [87] Modus et Racio.
- [88] Bruthus.
- [89] Les cronicques de Normandie.
- [90] Le mirouer historial.
- [91] Le tresor de nature.
- [92] Florant le fils Octovien.
- [93] Le seiour de honneur.
- [94] Blanchandin et l'orgueilleuse d'amours.
- [95] Gaultier de Saint Germain.
- [96*] Pierre de Provence.

f. 79v

- [97] Dampeter.
- [98] Le roy Apolin.
- [99] Le roy Richart d'Angleterre.
- [100] L'epistre Othea.
- [101] Thoseus de Coulongne.
- [102*] La vengeance de Jherusalem.
- [103*] Le testament de maistre Jehan de Meung.
- [104] La montaigne de contemplacion.
- [105] L'apocalice Saint Jehan.
- [106*] L'orloge de sapience.
- [107*] Le tresor de sapience.
- [108*] Le doctrinal de sapience.
- [109*] Le pelerin.
- [110] La vie Saint Anthoine.
- [111] La figure des philosophes.
- [112] La vie Nostre Seigneur.
- [113] La passion Nostre Seigneur.
- [114] L'esguillon d'amour divine.
- [115] L'esguillon d'amour et de crainte.
- [116*] Boece de consolacion.

- [117] Les exposicions des euvangilles.
- [118] Tulles des offices.
- [119] Tulles de viellesse.
- [120] Tulles d'amicie.
- [121] La vie des saints.
- [122] Le gouvernement des princes.
- [123] Le cordial des quatre choses dernieres.
- [124] Bonne vie.
- [125*] Le chevalier aux dames.
- [126] La cite des dames.
- [127] Le mirouer aux dames.
- [128] Le Chevalier de la Tour aux enseignemens des filles.
- [129] Les trois vertus aux enseignemens des dames.

f. 80r

- [130] Le nouvelet.
- [131] Bon advis.
- [132*] Bonnes meurs.
- [133] Coustumes et stille de Touraine.
- [134] Le livre des anges.
- [135] Exemples de la vie des peres.
- [136*] Le doctrinal de la foy.
- [137] Ung tractie de consolacion.
- [138] Le reductoire de l'ame.
- [139] Estrille Fauveau.
- [140] Le chevalier delibere.
- [141] L'ordre de chevalerie.
- [142] L'ordre Saint Michel.
- [143] Le triumphe des dames.
- [144] Le temple de Bocace.
- [145] Le viandier.
- [146] Le livre de faulconnerie.
- [147] L'adresse de pouvrete et de richesse.
- [148] Le passe temps d'oisivete.
- [149] Les quinze joyes de mariage.
- [150] Le pas du chevalier a l'arbre d'or.
- [151] Lettres de deffiance.
- [152] Les quatre dames.
- [153] La fleur des vertus mondaines.
- [154*] Le tresor Jarson.
- [155*] Le confessionnal Jarson.
- [156] Les lamentacions Saint Bernard.
- [157] Les meditacions Saint Bernard.
- [158] Les meditacions et contemplacions Saint Augustin.
- [159] L'ordonnance du char Saint Helye le prophete.
- [160] Le traictie de la misere de l'homme.
- [161] Maistre Hugues de Saint Victor.

f. 80v

- [162] Le mirouer d'or de l'ame pecheresse.
- [163*] Le lucidaire.
- [164] Sainte Katherine de Sene.
- [165] Sainte Elisabeth.
- [166] Sainte Barbe.
- [167] Le mirouer des pecheurs.
- [168] Les lamentacions Nostre Dame.
- [169] Les heures Nostre Dame en francois.
- [170] Saint Pierre de Luxembourg.
- [171] Vigilles de mors.
- [172] Le chapelet de virginite.
- [173] Le dimenche des rameaulx.
- [174] Le jardin de l'ame.
- [175] Le sourdit d'amoureuse voye.
- [176] La confession frere Olivier Maillart.
- [177] Le dialogue Caron.
- [178] L'oultre damours.
- [179] L'amant trespasse de dueil.
- [180] L'amant rendu cordelier/ l'observance damours.
- [181] Le gris et le noir.
- [182] Les epitaphes d'Ector et de Achilles.
- [183] Les epitaphes du feu roy de Cecille.
- [183bis] Et plusieurs aultres en grand nombre.
- [184] Item des Heures a l'usaige de Romme.
- [185] Et plusieurs aultres Heures de tous usages.

Autres livres en mistaires

- [186] La destruction de Troyes.
- [187] La Passion Nostre Seigneur.
- [188] L'omme pecheur.
- [189] Sainte Barbe.

f. 81r

- [190] Les quatre complections.
- [191] Sainte Katherine.
- [192] Sainte Marguerite.
- [193] Saint Eustace.
- [194] Saint Blaise.
- [195] Sainte Luce.
- [196] Sainte Apoline.
- [197] Sainte Agnes.
- [198] Saint George.
- [199] L'ame devoste.
- [200] Griselidis.
- [201] Bien advise.
- [202] La vie de Job.

- [203] Le pelerin du corps.
- [204] Le pelerinaige de l'ame.
- [205] Le pelerin Saint Jacques.
- [206] Theobaldus.
- [207] Saint Jehan.
- [208] Saint Symphorian.
- [209] Saint Crespin.
- [210] Sainte Priste.
- [211] Saint Espin.
- [212] Sainte Maure.
- [213] Le mauvais riche.
- [214] La nativite Nostre Seigneur.
- [215] Saints Fabian et Sebastian.
- [216] Saint Christofle.
- [217] La Purification Nostre Dame.
- [218] Le trois vertus.
- [219] Saint Laurens.

Moralites.

- [220] La langue envenimee.
- [221] Le roy souverain.
- [222] Sainte Eglise.

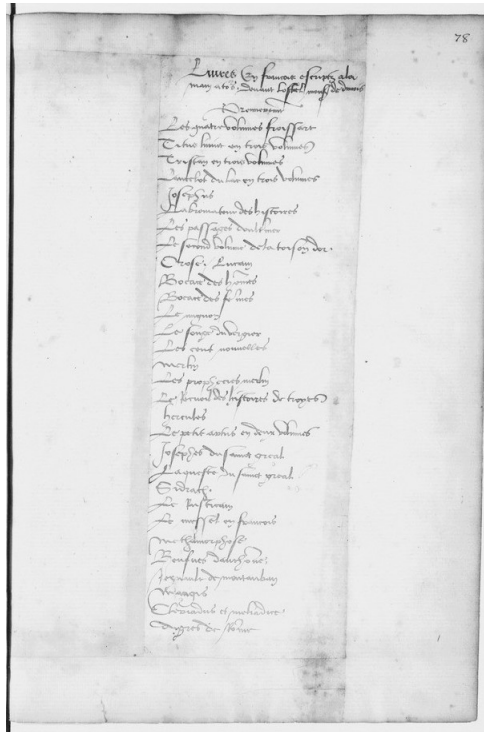
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- [223] Les enfans de maintenant.
 - [224] Le grant le moien et le petit.
 - [225] Compte et Relegua.
 - [226] La terre.
 - [227] Tout qui va mal.
 - [228] Chacun qui mect tout en son sac.
 - [229] Eur et maleur.
 - [230] Le pouvre peuple.
 - [231] Le pouvre commun.
 - [232] Le bien public.
 - [233] La court.
 - [234] La chastellene du vergier.
 - [235] Eur mondain.
 - [236] Pouvre de sante.
 - [237] La chair le monde et le diable.
 - [238] Et plusieurs aultres moralites et farces.
- Livres en francois en impression
- [239] La mer des histoires.
 - [240*] Orose.
 - [241] Eticques et politicques.
 - [242] Le propriétaire.
 - [243] Le mirouer de vie humaine.
 - [244] Le mirouer de la redempcion.

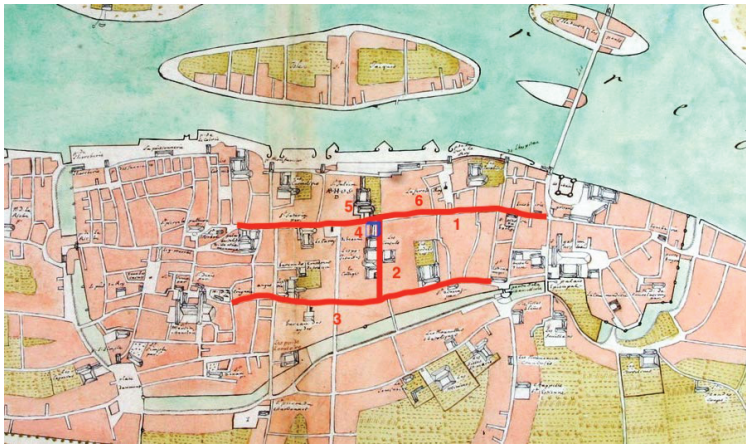
- [245*] Melusine.
- [246] Le vieil testament.
- [247*] Le doctrinal de la court.
- [248] Faciculus temporum.
- [249*] Le confessionnal Jarson.
- [250*] Le doctrinal de la foy.
- [251*] Maguelonne.
- [252*] Sidrach.
- [253*] Ponchus.

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- [254*] Le romant de la roze.
- [255*] Boece de consolacion.
- [256*] Bonnes meurs.
- [257] Mandeville.
- [258] Les commentaires Cesar.
- [259*] L'art de chevalerie.
- [260*] Le lucidaire.
- [261] Le doctrinal des chrestiens.
- [262] L'assault de Roddes.
- [263*] Le livre des vices et vertus.
- [264*] La vengeance de Jherusalem.
- [265] Prudence et Melibee.
- [266*] Le lay des trespases.
- [267] Et plusieurs aultres petits traicties.



Ill. 1 - Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 2912, f. 78r.



Ill. 2 - Detail of map of Tours made in ca. 1670 (Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 1200). 1: Grand Rue, 2: Rue Neuve, 3: Rue de la Scellerie, 4: Hôtel de Dunois, 5: Saint-Julien, 6: The printer Simon Pourcelet.

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TITLE

A List of 267 French Texts in Tours: a Hub for Reading in the Vernacular
Un elenco di 267 testi francesi a Toura: un centro per la lettura in volgare

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the late fifteenth-century booklist on folios 78r to 82v of Manuscript français 2912 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, listing over 267 books in French. A close study of the material aspects of the document itself and of the texts listed in the inventory has allowed for a new dating of the booklist, to shortly after 1494, and for a fairly reliable hypothesis concerning the owner of the books: a bookseller specialising in second-hand books in French. The geographical indication in the booklist, «In Tours in front of the hôtel [town house] of monseigneur de Dunois», can be located in the town on the basis of historical maps: in the Grand Rue (now the rue Colbert) against the southern wall of the church of Saint-Julien or next to its southern and main entrance. Comparison with other book producers and booksellers in Paris and in Flanders

shows that this is a typical location. The names and locations of booksellers and artisans active in the production of books in Tours as contained in the notarial archives of the town have unfortunately not permitted an identification of the bookseller, although the printer Simon Pourcelet had his printing workshop and bookshop nearby. Documented lending activities of booksellers in Flanders and the open character of other late medieval libraries and book collections show that this remarkably rich collection of literary, historical, pragmatic, and religious books in French was most likely an open access hub for reading in the vernacular in the bustling heart of late medieval Tours.

L'articolo analizza un elenco tardoquattrocentesco di libri, riportato sui *folii* 78r-82v del *Manuscript français 2912* conservato presso la Bibliothèque nationale de France a Parigi, in cui sono elencati oltre 267 libri in francese. Uno studio puntuale degli aspetti materiali del documento e dei testi in esso elencati ha permesso di stabilire, come nuova datazione dell'elenco di libri, un periodo di poco seguente al 1494, così come è stato possibile proporre un'ipotesi piuttosto attendibile relativamente al suo proprietario: un venditore di libri specializzato in testi in francese di seconda mano. L'indicazione geografica riportata nell'elenco, «A Tours davanti all'hôtel [casa cittadina] del monseigneur de Dunois» individuata nella città sulla base delle mappe storiche: si trovava nella Grand Rue (ora rue Colbert) contro le mura meridionali della chiesa di Saint-Julien, o di fianco alla sua entrata principale, quella meridionale. Un confronto con altri produttori e venditori di libri a Parigi e nelle Fiandre evidenzia come questa sia una collocazione tipica. Il nome e la posizione spaziale dei rivenditori e degli artigiani attivi nella produzione di libri a Tours, contenuti negli archivi notarili della città, sfortunatamente non hanno permesso di identificare il venditore di libri in questione, nonostante lo stampatore Simon Pourcelet avesse la sua stamperia e il suo negozio nelle vicinanze. L'attività di prestito dei venditori di libri fiamminghi e l'aspetto 'aperto' delle altre biblioteche medievali e delle collezioni di libri dimostrano che questa collezione, particolarmente ricca di opere in francese di tema letterario, storico, pragmatico e religioso, fu probabilmente un luogo di libero accesso per la lettura vernacolare nel cuore pulsante della Tours bassomedievale.

KEYWORDS

Booklist, Inventory, Library, Bookseller, Books in French, Tours (France)

Elenco di libri, inventario, biblioteca, venditore di libri, libri in francese, Tours (Francia)