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Communiqué de presse

THE COLLECTION OF JEAN BONNA

Books & Manuscripts, 15th - 20th centuries

The **Jean Bonna** collection, simply put, is exceptional! The catalogues of his unique literary library spanning five centuries is now being published and edited by Véréne de Soultrait*. These open a window onto the breadth and depth of the uncommon path traced by the renowned connoisseur and insatiable reader. The remarkable collection to be auctioned next April 26th at Drouot is testimony to Jean Bonna's unusual and far-reaching passions: travel, science, political economy, artists' books, the unique typographical and historical which coexist with great works of literature - from the extraordinary dedication copy of **Galileo's** *Discorsi*, all the way to the first book by **Friedrich Engels**.

What is bibliophilia? Jean Bonna offers a well-structured answer based on the books and manuscripts he has personally selected. Bibliophilia is not a mania; it is both a curiosity and a taste - a taste, for example, for significant documents such as the drafted autograph essay in defense of *Madame Bovary*, which **Flaubert** was forbidden to publish, or, for the beautiful letter by the poet **Veronica Gambara** to **Pietro Aretino**, in which the restraint resounds more eloquently than its words. Curiosity, of course, for bindings, among which, here: **Rose Adler**, **André Mare**, **René Wiener**, etc. Some of these were commissioned by the connoisseur, himself, firmly anchoring his library in the present. Hence, no fewer than 15 original creations, by Jean Gonet are presented, covering books covering the 15th-20th centuries. Gonet, the *master binder* of the end of the 20th century, who upturned the established codes and aesthetics that are the craft of bookbinding, tackled every genre with brio. The dispersion of such a significant number of his creations is homage to his unique talent.

Jean Bonna personifies a way of collecting without *a priori* and thus follows in the footsteps of some of the finest contemporary connoisseurs such as **Jean-Paul Barbier Mueller**, **Pierre Bergé** and **Jacques Guérin**. It is of no surprise that, in his sale, two items come from the collection of the latter: the fine large paper copy of *Genie du Christianisme* by **Chateaubriand** and the autograph manuscript of a poem by **Stéphane Mallarmé**: *A celle qui est tranquille*.

AUCTION Wednesday 26 April, 2017

LOCATION Drouot Richelieu - Salle 5

EXHIBITION: SOTHEBY'S LONDON 28, 29 - 30 March, 2017

EXHIBITION: DROUOT PARIS 24 - 25 April, 2017

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Books of the 15th and 16th centuries

Among the old and rare books, several works are preserved in their original bindings, some with polychrome decors as is the case of a 1554 **Virgil**, a superb Protestant *Bible* printed in 1570 in a Genevan binding, and Petrarch's *Euvres vulgaires*, printed in Avignon in 1555: the French translation by Vasquin Philieul from Carpentras is testimony to the importance of Provence in the dissemination of Petrarchism in France during the 16th century. Also found here, a Venetian edition of **Dante's** *Divina Commedia* (1569) in lovely contemporary gilt vellum.

Without a doubt, the most precious of the Renaissance bindings presented here was executed circa 1540 by the royal binder **Etienne Roffet** for King François I. Melding in its design the royal coat-of-arms as well as the salamander, the binding holds a copy of the 1533 Aldin edition of the *Libri de re rustica*. This exquisite volume was housed in the sovereign's renowned "bibliothèque italienne", the royal *Italian library* which was to become a landmark in the history of bookbinding. Indeed, for the first time, coat-of-arms were systematically stamped on books belonging to a private collector.

Of particular note among the illustrated volumes of the 15th and 16th centuries are *La Louenge et vertu des nobles et cleres dames* by **Boccaccio**, published by Vérard in 1493 with 80 wood engravings; the *Dialogus creaturarum* published in Antwerp by Gérard Leeu in 1491, illustrated with a famous suite of 121 archaic woodcuts depicting animals (superb ebony binding by Jean de Gonet) and, also, **Eloy d'Amerval's** *Grant Dyablerie* (Paris, 1518) recreating the imaginary dialogue between Lucifer, Prince of Hell, and Satan, his ambassador to Earth. The two devils congratulate each other, praising the evil they generate. The volume bears the manuscript ex-libris of Enguerrand Charreton, dated 1519, undoubtedly a descendant of Enguerrand Quarton, the renowned painter of *The Coronation of the Virgin* held in the museum of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon.

The 17th Century

The books of the 17th century are also distinguished by their armorial bindings or by their illustration.

The first edition of **Bossuet's** *Apocalypse* (1689) was bound for police Lieutenant La Reynie in contemporary morocco with his coat-of-arms gilt on sides; the *Sermons* of **Bourdaloue**, one of Madame de Sévigné's favorite preachers, is preserved in contemporary morocco and bears the well-known golden emblems of the Baron de Longepierre; the original edition of *L'Impiété des Deistes, Athees, et Libertins de ce temps* by **Marin Mersenne** (1624) was bound for Cardinal Richelieu in morocco. In addition, the *Traité des obligations des Chrétiens* by the **Abbé de Rancé** (1699) is even more remarkable. A vade mecum of virtues, issued a few months before the author's death (who inspired one of the most beautiful works by Chateaubriand), the *Traité* was the austere theologian's spiritual testament. The copy was bound at the time in morocco for King James II, with his coat-of-arms gilt on sides: the last Catholic king of England, he was exiled in France and befriended Rancé.

Several illustrated books of this century deserve special attention: the *Portraits des hommes illustres* by **Perrault**, a fine copy in contemporary binding and complete with the portraits of Arnauld and Pascal, censored due to their Jansenism; the truculent anthology of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* illustrated with 100 engraved vignettes by **Romeyn de Hooghe** (a lovely copy in 18th century citron morocco) and, also, the delightful *Jardin d'hyver* by **Jean Franeau** printed in Douai in 1616: this "cabinet of botanical curiosities" is illustrated with 52 engraved plates, depicting flowers and bouquets by **Antoine Serrurier**. Finally, *Della Cavalleria* by **Georg Englehard von Löhneysen** (1552-1622) ranks among the most spectacular works ever to have been issued by a private press. A large folio, printed in 1609 in the author's castle in Remlingen (Bavaria), the work is an equine encyclopedia. It is illustrated with 89 remarkable engravings, of which 23 are double-page, as well as nearly 250 woodcuts - an extraordinary burst of baroque images.

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Books of the Enlightenment

A fine selection is devoted to the Enlightenment with the original editions of **Choderlos de Laclos's** *Liaisons dangereuses*, *l'Histoire des singes* by **Alletz**, a pioneering work on ethology, **Bougainville's** *Voyage autour du monde* which was to give birth to the myth of the "noble savage", **Le Sage's** *Le Diable boiteux*, destined to become a phenomenal success, or **Rousseau's** *Nouvelle Héloïse* - first issued as *Lettres de deux amants* (1761) - a fine copy in contemporary morocco. Also of note, an autograph letter from **Voltaire** to d'Argenson and the renowned *Contes et nouvelles en vers* by **La Fontaine** illustrated by **Fragonard** (1765).

Along with these celebrated works are curiosities of great appeal to bibliophiles, such as the *Cours des principaux fleuves et rivières de l'Europe* printed at Versailles by King Louis XV, at the age of 8 on his private press: on which he learned the basics of the art of printing. Jean Bonna's copy is without equal: it was bound for the **Marquise de Pompadour**, the future mistress of the young amateur printer. Also of appeal, the original edition of *La Guirlande de Julie* (1729), one of the finest collections of courtship poetry from the previous century: the copy was bound at the beginning of the 19th century for the personal library of Josephine and Bonaparte in La Malmaison - a poetic garland for the wife of the future Emperor.

Finally, the collection also includes a run of 14 first editions of works by **Restif de La Bretonne**, the indefatigable chronicler of the mores of the vanishing Ancien Régime, whose own gallivanting filled his gossip columns: often self-printed, his works are usually illustrated with engravings by **Binet** which add a touch of spice - in accordance with his fantasies: small-waisted women with small feet.

Manuscripts and letters

This sale gathers nearly 100 autograph documents dating from the 16th -20th centuries, with fine sets around **Baudelaire**, **Flaubert**, **Hugo**, **Nerval**, **Proust** and **Stendhal**. To deceive the indiscrete reader, the latter used pseudonyms, composing letters in a mix of Italian, English and French: for example, he oddly wrote to his sister in 1810: "*You must take the gouvernail*". The letters sent by Baudelaire to his mother are moving and those concerning Belgium are filled with rage. To this day, the letters addressed by Flaubert to Louise Colet are masterpieces of amorous correspondence: "*Je suis un des gueulards au désert de la vie*" (*I am one of the gripers in the desert of life*), he allows. Further, he confesses: "*Je lis du Montaigne maintenant dans mon lit. Je ne connais pas de livre plus calme & qui vous dispose à plus de sérénité.*" (*I now read Montaigne in my bed. I know of no book more soothing & which allows one more serenity*)

The hand-written log of observations that **Victor Hugo** kept in Guernsey in 1856 renders the poet's spiritualist experiences: visions, spinning tables... To protect the memory of the great poet, his heirs withheld this intimate diary. Also, among the 8 autograph letters of **Proust** offered here, the one written on July 1, 1919 to the son of the actress Réjane, Jacques Porel, has some bite. The writer, subletting the actress' apartment on the rue Laurent-Pichat, complains of the "racket" in the building: "*Les voisins dont me sépare la cloison font l'amour tous les 2 jours avec une frénésie dont je suis jaloux*" (*Beyond the partition, the neighbors make love every two days with a frenzy of which I am jealous*)...

Lastly, the set of 24 original letters sent by **Guy de Maupassant** to Countess Potocka (1883-1891) is exceptional. In a total of over 120 autograph pages, this extraordinary correspondence from the writer to his muse and confidante teems with both intimate and literary considerations; impressions of travels as well as philosophical notes whilst mirroring the author's slow descent into the madness which would soon overwhelm him.

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Books illustrated by painters

This collection houses fine artists' books illustrated by: **Edouard Manet** (the copy of his 1875 *Corbeau* was beautifully bound by Jean de Gonet), **André Masson**, **Hans Bellmer**, **Jean Fautrier**, **Pablo Picasso**, **Joan Miró**, **Edgar Tytgat** (his rare first *Petit Chaperon rouge*, London 1917, printed in 15 copies only) **Paul Jouve**, **Raoul Dufy** (10 original watercolors illustrating *La Chatte* by **Colette**), **André Derain** (5 books illustrated by him, including *Le Nez de Cléopâtre*, masterfully bound by Rose Adler), **Geneviève Asse**, **Marcel Duchamp** (*La Mariée mise à nu*), **Maurice Denis**, **Henri Matisse** (5 books including **Mallarmé's** *Poésies* and *Florilège des amours* by **Ronsard**), **Joseph Sima**, **Wols**, **Juan Gris**...

Also, of special interest, *L'Homme et son désir* by **Paul Claudel**, in which the autograph text is illustrated by **Audrey Parr** in Brazil, in 1917: its form is that of an accordion over 1,50 meters in length (approximately 5 feet).

Dedications and Provenance

An additional charm of collecting books lies in the autograph dedication inscribed by the authors on their works, as well as the provenance, establishing the genealogy of each book.

If Jean Bonna acquired the first edition of **Galileo's** *Discorsi e Dimostrazioni matematiche* (Leyde, 1638), it is not only because of his taste for seminal works but, also, because it is a unique copy magnificently bound for the dedicatee, Count François de Noailles. Its binding was executed at the time by **Le Gascon** in morocco, entirely covered with a splendid gilt decor "à la fanfare". Not only is this the most beautiful copy known, but it is unquestionably one of the best association copies to be found: it could be compared to the colored copy of Fuchs bound for Jacques-Auguste de Thou (Pierre Bergé library) or Newton's *Principia*, annotated by Leibniz (Bodmer Foundation, Geneva).

It is this notion of association that imparts the very depth of the dedications apposed by the authors on the title page of their works.

Thus, **Bloy** addressing to Rachilde *Sueur de sang*, his very dark anthology devoted to the War of 1870, tersely inscribes: "*Voici la gueule du Monstre.*" (*Here is the Monster's mug*) As a sort of revenge, the turbulent high school student from Rouen, expelled for lack of discipline, gifts his freshly printed *Madame Bovary* with this delectable dedication: "*à mon ami Mr Dainez, mon ancien professeur de mathématiques, le plus dévoué et le plus âne de ses élèves, Gustave Flaubert.*" (*To my friend Mr. Dainez, my old math teacher, the most devoted and dumbest of his students...*)

Addressing his anthology *Charmes*, to his former classmate and friend **André Gide**, **Paul Valéry** has written: "*Que diable veux-tu que je mette ici ? Tante cose !*" (*What the devil do you want me to put here? So many things!*) Indeed, "so many things" bound these two.

Unmistakably, and by far, the two most touching dedications of this collection are those inscribed by **Jorge-Luis Borges** on his first two books, *Fervor de Buenos Aires* and *Luna de enfrente*, for these are dedicated to his lifelong friend Maurice Abramovicz. The two were classmates at the Lycée Calvin in Geneva and remained close forever. At the end of his life, after the death of Abramovicz, Borges dedicated a text in his *Los Conjurados*: "*Esta noche puedo llorar como un hombre, puedo sentir que por mis mejillas las lágrimas resbalan, porque sé que en la tierra no hay una sola cosa que sea mortal y que no proyecte su sombra.*" (*Tonight I can weep like a man; I can feel the tears because I know that on this earth not one thing is mortal and which does not cast its shadow.*)

The shadows cast by the books of bygone authors assembled by the bibliophile, are testimony to an uninterrupted life, from one collector to another. What if this celebration of the mind, this effervescence of books, were, in the end, the best definition of bibliophilia?

* The two volumes devoted to the 16th century have now been published. They follow the three volumes published earlier, devoted to the 17th and 18th centuries. Véréne de Soultrait is now editing the next volume devoted to the incunabula.

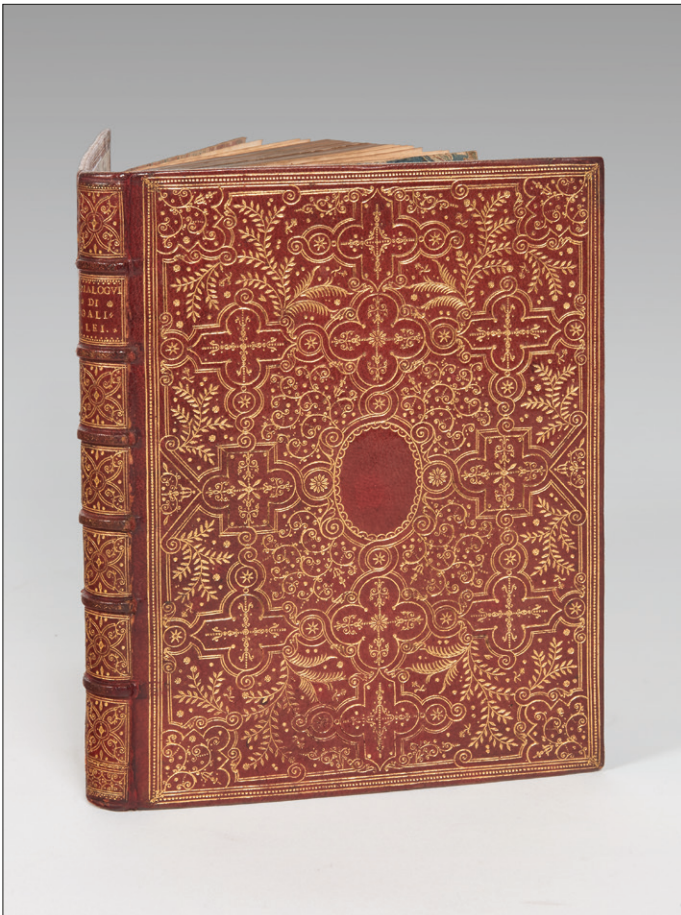
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GALILEO. *Discorsi e Dimostrazioni matematiche*. Leyde, 1638.

First edition of this seminal work: "The first modern textbook in Physics" (Dibner).
The dedication copy, superbly bound in morocco by Le Gascon for François de Noailles (1584-1645),
with a stunning gilt decor *à la fanfare*.

700 000 / 900 000 €

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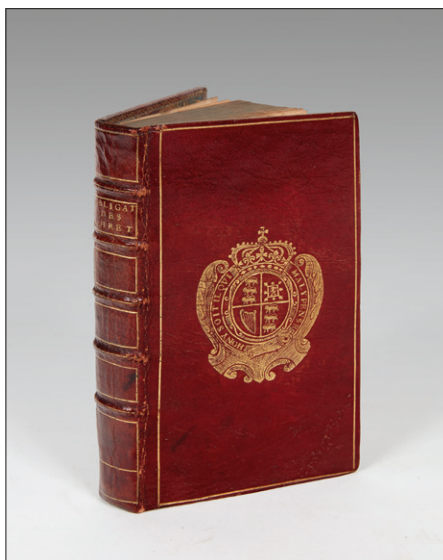
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Libri de re rustica. Venise, 1533.

Second Aldine edition.
An outstanding copy bound for King François I with his gilt-tooled coat-of-arms and salamander emblem.

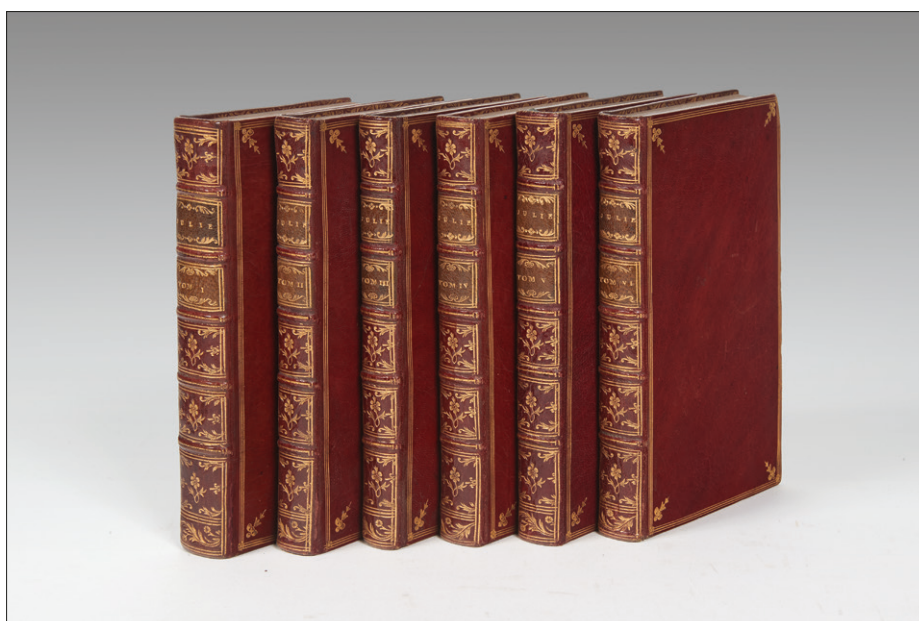
80 000 / 120 000 €

RANCÉ. *Traité abrégé des Obligations des Chrétiens*. Paris, 1699.

First edition of this vade mecum of virtues published shortly before the author's death.

An exceptional copy, bound at the time in morocco for King James II, with his coat-of-arms gilt on sides: the last Catholic king of England, he was exiled in France and befriended Rancé.

6 000 / 8 000 €



ROUSSEAU. *Lettres de deux amans*. Amsterdam, 1761.

First edition of the *New Heloise*: a fine copy in contemporary morocco gilt.

15 000 / 20 000 €

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LÖHNEYSSEN. *Della cavalleria*.
Remlingen, 1609.

First edition privately printed on the author's press in his castle in Remlingen (Bavaria). One of the baroque masterpieces of bookprinting, this equine encyclopedia is illustrated with 89 remarkable engravings, of which 23 are double-page, as well as nearly 250 woodcuts.

40 000 / 60 000 €

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CLAUDEL. *L'Homme et son désir*. Petropolis, 1917.

First edition of this “poem sculpture”, handmade by Audrey Parr in circa 50 copies. Its form is that of an accordion measuring 1,67 meters in length (approximately 5 feet): the front face is displaying the autograph text, the back the musical score; the work also marks the renewal of occidental music inspired by African American rhythms.

10 000 / 15 000 €



DUCHAMP. *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*. Paris, 1934.

First edition printed in 320 copies of Duchamp's iconic “Green Box”, a book artifact including 94 documents. Inscribed by Marcel Duchamp to the artist Wolfgang Paalen.

15 000 / 20 000 €

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LA FONTAINE.
Fables illustrées par Benjamin Rabier.
Paris, [1906].

An extraordinary binding, ciselled, painted and varnished by André Mare at the time: this is one of the most spectacular specimens made by the French Art deco designer.

15 000 / 20 000 €



A superb collection of 15 original bindings by Jean de Gonet covering books from the 15th to the 20th century.

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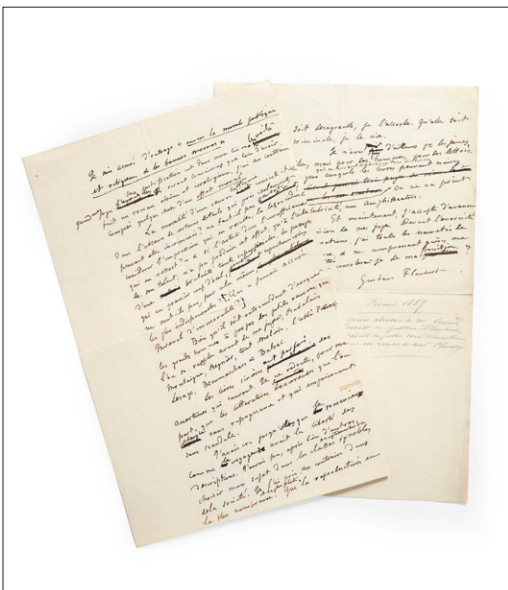
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FLAUBERT. Projet de préface au Mémoire en défense de *Madame Bovary*. [January 1857].

An outstanding autograph signed manuscript of Flaubert's drafted foreword to his Defense of *Madame Bovary*, an essay which the author would never be allowed to publish.

40 000 / 60 000 €



MAUPASSANT. 47 letters sent to Countess Potocka. 1883-1891.

Extraordinary autograph correspondence sent by Guy de Maupassant to his muse and confidante Countess Potocka (1883-1891): in a total of over 120 autograph pages, it teems with both intimate and literary considerations; impressions of travels as well as philosophical notes whilst mirroring the author's slow descent into the madness which would soon overwhelm him.

40 000 / 60 000 €