

**A CATALOGUE OF ABOUT 130
SELECTED FRENCH ALMANACS
FROM A COMPLETE COLLECTION
(1694-1883). PP.3-28**

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pp.3-28 by Grolier Club

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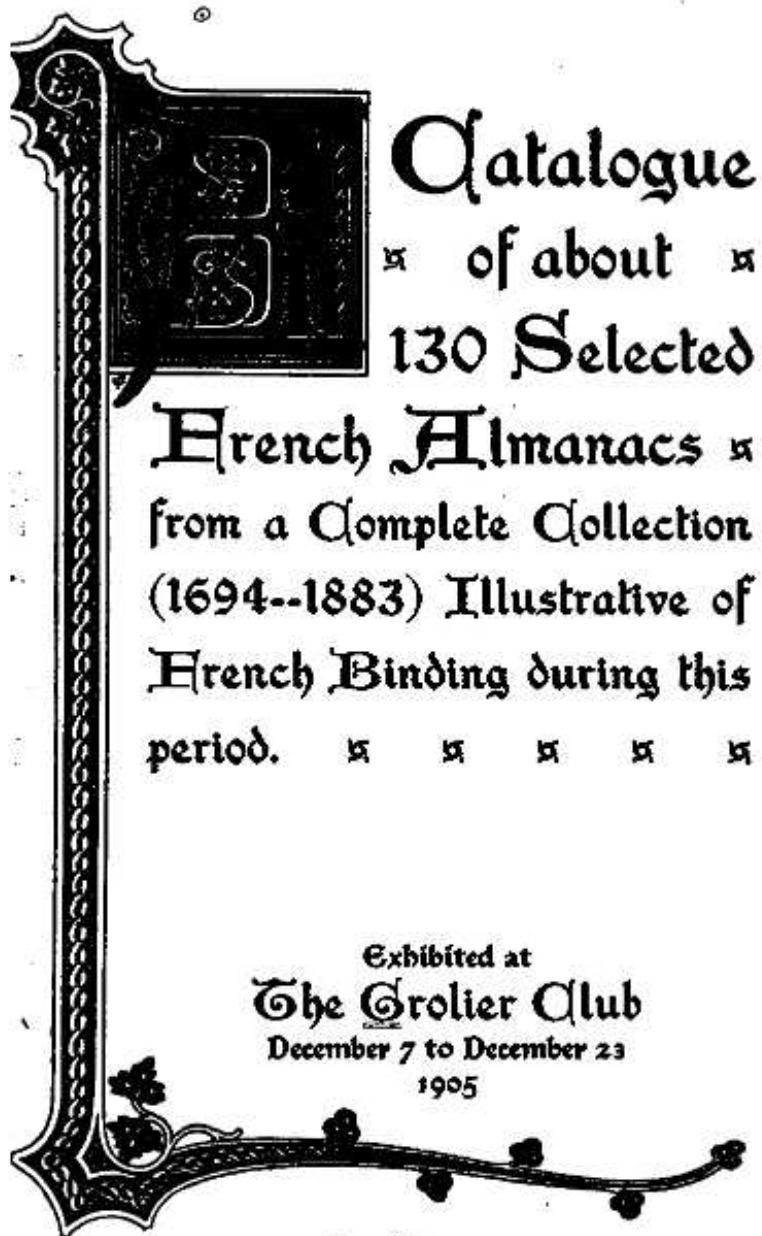
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GROLIER CLUB

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FROM A COMPLETE COLLECTION
(1694-1883). PP.3-28**



B Catalogue
of about
130 Selected
French Almanacs
from a Complete Collection
(1694--1883) Illustrative of
French Binding during this
period.

Exhibited at
The Grolier Club
December 7 to December 23
1905

7. 3. 1905.



INTRODUCTION

It is unnecessary to give here a history of French bookbinding. There are, however, no exhaustive handbooks on the subject. The best is probably Ernest Thoinan's "Les relieurs français (1500-1800): biographie critique et anecdotique," Paris, 1893. E. Fournier's "L'art de la reliure en France," Paris, 1888, may also be consulted, and Léon Gruel's "Manuel historique et bibliographique de l'amateur des reliures," Paris, 1887. Of considerable importance is the "Nouvel armorial du bibliophile," by J. Guigard, Paris, 1890 (2 vols., impl. 8vo). Consequently a brief reference to the whole subject must be attempted.

We hear of Clovis Eve, Dubuisson, Padeloup, Derome, etc., without realizing fully that binding as an old-fashioned trade was regularly practised by whole families over a considerable period. Thus E. Fournier and even Guigard seem to have got a little mixed up over the Eve family. As a matter of fact, Nicholas Eve as a

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binder is practically a *quantité négligeable*, and Clovis Eve's successor the same; the bindings issuing from this family's house being really nearly all the work of, or under the supervision of, Clovis Eve himself (*circa* 1570-1634). Pigoreau (about 1615 onward) was chiefly employed as masterworker in the *dorure* of Eve's bindings. Thence forward or soon after the two crafts became practically one. But all this is full early for an introduction to the binders of the XVIII century. It is mentioned chiefly as an illustration of the same difficulty which covers the appreciation of the work of the Derome family, who flourished from 1626 to 1788; while but two of the family—Louis Derome (1662-1720),* known as Derome vieux, and Nicholas Denis Derome (1731-1788), known as Derome jeune—stand out as first-class binders, although many of the other members of the family earned their living during this long period in the same trade. This is also the case with the Dubuissons, where René Dubuisson overlapped the more famous Pierre Paul Dubuisson, court binder till 1762, when his widow must have disposed of his many "plaques," which reappear till 1787 or even 1790, so that either René employed the same methods or bought or inherited the plates (he worked till 1776, or later), unless they went to the Lafertés

* Began binding about 1698.

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père et fils, who also worked till 1790. The latter seems to me the more likely, as I find the plaques as late as 1790.

Vérard and P. Le Noir (1475 onward) combined the trades of publishers and bookbinders.

But few of the earliest binders' names have descended to us, though from 1495 to 1500 a few are known as having bound for the Duc d'Orléans, viz., Guillaume Deschamps, J. Richier, and Simon Accard de Chauny. Grolier's books are said to have been all bound by nameless binders from Italy, probably of Greek origin. De Thou (1573-1617) does not give us any idea of the names of his workmen, though Eve no doubt bound some of his many volumes.

Le Gascon began in 1622, and was at his best in 1641. Mr. Fichon thinks he may have bound for the second J. A. de Thou. Le Gascon's authentic bindings are said to be recognizable by "des fils d'argent et de soie alternés à la tranchefile" (headband). Le Gascon was one of the first to use a doublure of leather. Contemporaries of Le Gascon were L. Petit and Saulnier; also the lesser lights Eudes, Talon, Moret, Du Breuil, Hugues d'Aumale, Galliard, Filon, Guenon, Cramoisy.

A good many volumes attributed to Le Gascon are said, however, to be the work of F. Badier

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around the date of 1645; and he is responsible for the chief examples of the beautiful *pointillé* style.

Macé Ruette (16— to 1644), who, according to La Caille, invented marbled paper for doublures, worked for Henri IV (1635-1644). Louis XIII (1601-1643) employed Clovis Eve first, and then Antoine Ruette, who succeeded his father and was royal binder during the reigns of Louis XIII and XIV. He executed much work in the nature of binding *livres d'heures*, on some of which his name is to be found. He was succeeded by Boyet (1695-1710), who was followed by Dubois (1722 and before), who was succeeded by Padeloup (1740) as royal binder. Padeloup's name ("Padeloup relieur du roy, place de la Sorbonne à Paris,") is said to be found in some books of Marie Leczińska and of the Dauphin.

Padeloup and the elder Derome were contemporaries. E. Fournier, comparing Derome and Padeloup, says: "Padeloup was an artist to whom one had to give free rein; Derome was the workman who awaited your commands, executed your order, and did it well."

"Les armoiries qui décorent souvent les plats des reliures dues à Boyet, Du Seuil, Padeloup, en font aussi des objets d'art. Leur principal relief est pourtant la simplicité. Ces relieurs

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étaient des artistes qui possèdent, de nos jours, une considération méritée, et dont les reliures obtiennent souvent le prix d'une toile de maître, mais qui ne jouissaient pas du même crédit du vivant de ceux qui les ont faites." ("Connaissances nécessaires à un bibliophile," Vol. IV, p. 139, by Ed. Rouveyre, Paris, 1899.)

Padeloup vieux and Padeloup jeune are also said to have signed numerous bindings. Padeloup employed the Dubuissos, whose immense variety of "plaque" bindings were much in vogue, and who succeeded him as court binders. P. P. Dubuisson died in 1762, and P. A. Laferté was appointed in his stead. He was followed in 1769 by his son, and he again was followed by P. Vente (1722-1792), whose work is said to be mediocre.

There were many other binders in the Louis XV period. Oudan, Michon, Bernache, D. Nyon, and M. Maugras are all said to have been good binders. Douccur and Biziaux bound for the Pompadour. E. Levasseur (about 1690) is said by La Caille ("Histoire de l'imprimerie") to have been the best binder of his day, but he could not make the *dos brisé** properly, so that this praise is too high.

**Dos brisé* is equivalent to a deep opening, so that the book opens perfectly. This art has been lost and found again many times since binding began.

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Duseuil (1705) we have not mentioned. He is reported by some to have been not exactly a professional bookbinder, but a priest, and used his spare time to follow this extra profession. He bound many volumes for the famous Loménie de Brienne library, and, according to E. Fournier, his name is to be found in some of the books; whereas Thoinan declares twice over that no authentic binding of Duseuil is known. Others say Duseuil was not an abbé at all, and others again think there were *two* Duseuils—one a professional who married into the Padeloup family, and the other an abbé. Duseuil, Boyer (there were Boyets and Boyers), Padeloup, and Anguerrand, all bound for the Abbé Rothelin. Derome had also as contemporaries Bradel, Ducastin, Du Planil, and many others.

Turning to the beginning of the XIX century, which does not seem so far away, we have Bozerian aîné, a very mediocre binder, and Courteval (1810). Bozerian jeune, the brother of the elder Bozerian, was a better workman. Thouvenin, however, may be said to have revived the art, and improved as he worked, but he died young in 1834—hardly forty years old. He was succeeded by Bauzonnet, by Trautz (his son-in-law), by Capé and Duru (both excellent workmen), Simier, Ottmann, and Niedrée, Koelher and Gonel, Petit and David, Lenegre and the rest to modern times.