



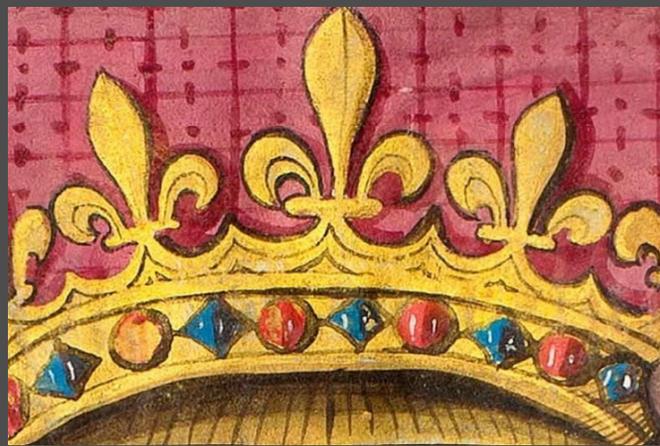
Spotlight  
on  
French Patrimony

## The Royal Radegund

Paris, Salon international du livre rare  
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DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER · RARE BOOKS AG  
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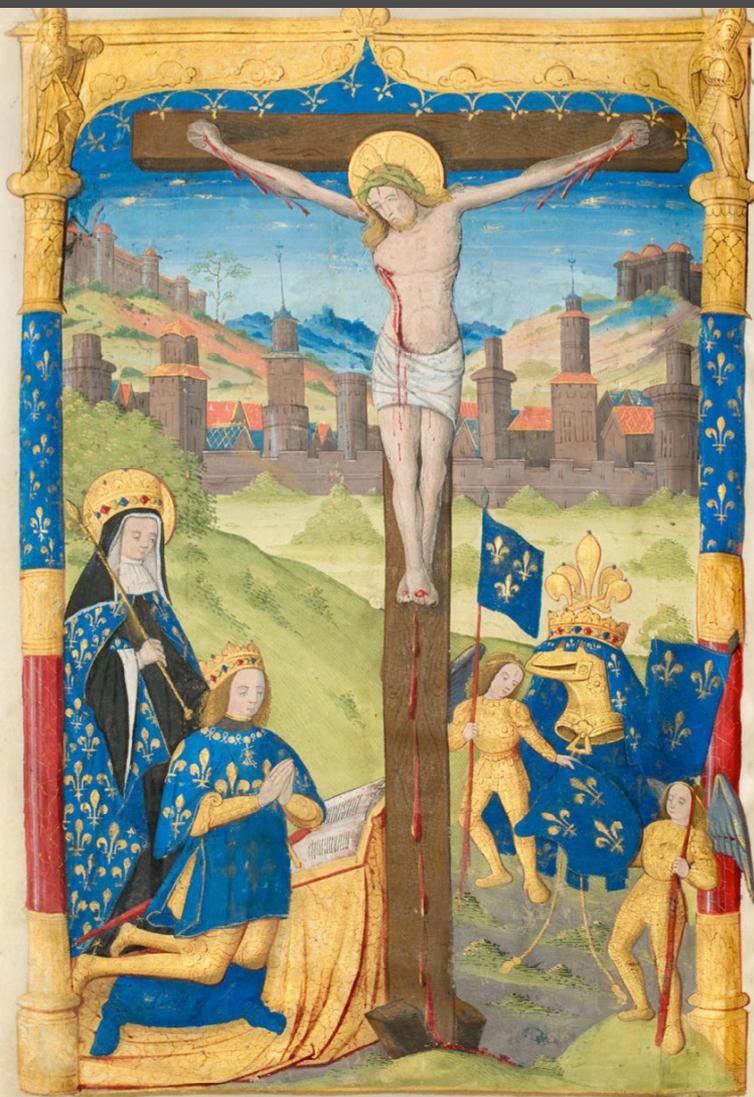




We are very proud to exhibit for the first time and to return to France after many decades of being lost from view, the extraordinary, royal, luxuriously illuminated *Life of St. Radegund*, made for King Charles VIII and his Queen Anne of Bretagne.

At the Salon du Livre Rare in Paris, we are offering the unique opportunity not only to examine, but also to purchase for your own collection, this treasure of French patrimony.





*Ec. Libris. P. B. de La Haye*



Prince puissant Triumphant en victoire  
 Et president ou Royal auditoire  
 De priamuis Regnant sur les gaulois  
 Et reserues de leglise admittore  
 Dont vos vertus vous monstrent meritoire  
 Destre nomme le pere de nos loix  
 Non pourneant on vous dit de ulors  
 Auillant sur tous plus que ne puis descriue  
 Vous estes cil de qui on doit escriue  
 Les nobles fais qui les autres surmontent  
 Qui ennoblist ainsi que ie puis dire  
 Les fleurs de lis qui sur tous royaux montent

This manuscript about the Queen and Saint Radegonde was made for Charles VIII and his wife Anne of Brittany, in Poitiers in 1496-98. It portrays the King of France protected by the saintly queen as well as the royal arms and royal emblem, the *épée enflammée*.



Charles VIII (1470-1498) and Anne, duchess of Bretagne (1477-1519) married in 1491. None of the six children born from this union survived childhood. The manuscript on Saint Radegonde presented here can be rather precisely dated to 1496-1498, when the most recent events described took place and before the King died unexpectedly (these portraits in: Paris, BnF, ms. Lat. 1190, 1492-1495).



an de grace Quatre cents qua  
trevingts et quatre. Clovis  
Roy de france second de ce nom  
Après la mort de son pere  
childe rich par le conseil de sa  
femme clothild & fille du Roy

The text of this *Life of St. Radegund*, including her *Office*, *Mass* and *Miracles*, and dedicatory poems, is a thrilling tribute to France and to Poitiers and may be identified as the lost work written by Jean Bouchet of Poitiers, as mentioned by him in 1517.

(At left:) The young princess Radegund (518-87), consents "for the sake of France" to wed the despotic King Clothaire (d. 561) and became a role model for future kings and queens.

France, Poitiers, c. 1496-98.

260 x 180, vellum, 66 leaves, with 11 large miniatures surrounded by full borders.



While the King feasts, Queen Radegund feeds the poor.





Radegund endures years of the king's misconduct but continues to serve France. When the king kills her younger brother, the queen and her consorts find refuge with Médard of Noyon. Here Radegund expresses the wish to retire to a convent.

The oldest manuscript of her life dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Poitiers, BM, ms. 250). In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the iconography and text were adapted to that era.





On her flight, a miracle prevents the king from finding her. Soon more miracles occur. In Poitiers she founded a monastery. Above, the Byzantine emperor presents her with a reliquary of the Holy Cross.



(Above:) Reliquary of the True Cross at Poitiers offered by the Byzantine emperor to Queen Radegund. Today it is preserved in the abbey of St. Benoit de Vienne, south of Poitiers.

(At left:) Church of St. Radegund in Poitiers.



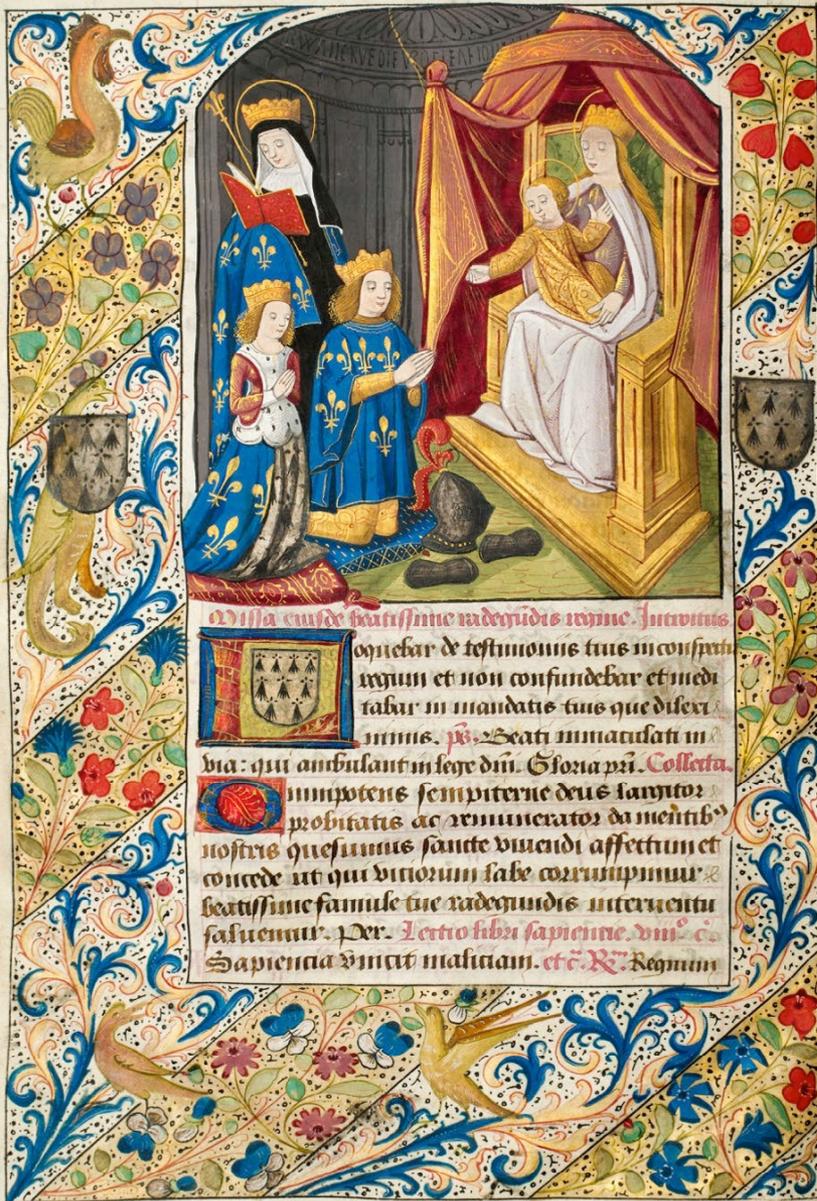
A church is dedicated to Radegund in Poitiers, where her tomb is found in the crypt. Although, she was buried here in 587, the sarcophagus itself dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As is described in our manuscript, it was opened in 1417 upon the request of John, duke of Berry. Immediately after St. Radegund's death, miracles occurred at and nearby her tomb, which attracted numerous pilgrims to Poitiers.



**E**ulx estans en ceste dament bunt  
vne columbe qui fist trois volles  
en tour de leur nef. Ce que  
bonur sedit Roualus chapelain  
et seruitur de madame sainte Radegonde vint  
la columbe par la queue et tira trois pleumes  
en disant que madame sainte Radegonde sa  
maistresse auoit exaulce leur piece. et mouuuet  
toucha lamer desoties pleumes et lors soubdrament

The manuscript's text comprises the stories of numerous miracles, as well as poems, likely written by a citizen of Poitiers in dedication to (and promotion of) the city's patron saint.

(At left:) Praying to Radegund saves us from disaster.

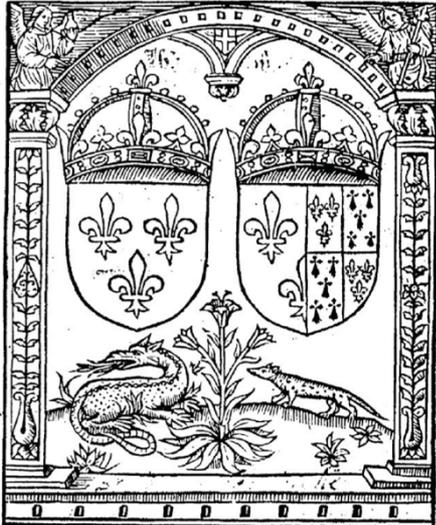


Moreover, poems are devoted to the "prince regnant" and to the city of Poitiers ("Poitiers, Poitiers, cite royale", f. 54). The text, a gift to the king, was made at his request ("vostre command", f. 54v). In this personal document, the poet also expresses the wish that the queen may give birth to a "beau dauphin".

Charles VIII, however, died unexpectedly on 7 April 1498 without a direct heir. The single arms of Brittany added to the final miniature suggest that the widowed Anne, duchess of Brittany, took the manuscript with her to Brittany when she left the court.

**Histoire et cronique de Clotaire**

Premier de ce nom, dui. roy des frâcoys, et monarque des gaulles. Et de sa tres illustre epouse madame sainte Radegonde extraicte au viay de plusieurs croniques antiqs & modernes.



Considerate lilia agri quomō crescūt: nec salomon in omni gloria sua Vesticbat sicut Dñi ex istis. luc. xij. c. et Math. sexto

**Cum priuilegio regis.**



**francois. et monarque des gaulles  
et de sa tresloyalle espouse Ma da-  
me sainte Radegonde.**

La tres haulte tres noble et sacree princesse madame Claude fille de roy. Et par la grace diuine Royne de france. Le traicteur des boyes perilleux rend tres humble salut.

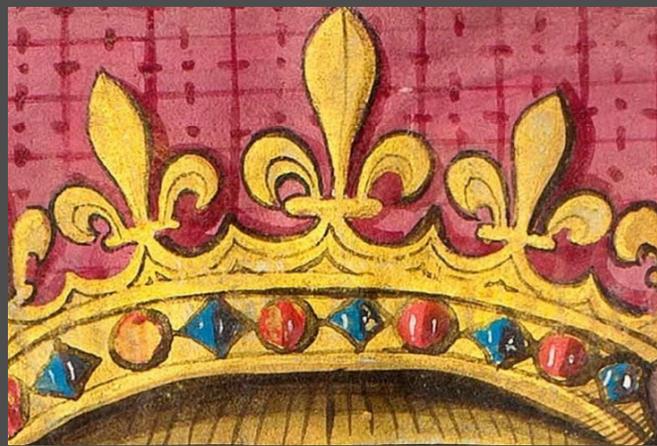
**O**mmes le viuât du feu et d'icele crestien Roy de france Charles huitiesme de ce nom. Par son commandement ie eusse sommairement translate de latin en francois La legende tres gloieuse royne de france Madame sainte Radegonde qui fut espouse du roy clotaire premier de ce nom. Et depuis sitant les anciennes histories ou ie me suis par quelques articles applicques eusse madicte translation trouuee defectueuse plusieurs articles imparfaicte et mal cōtinuee tant pour ce que des ieunes ans que i'auois lors que par faulte d'auoir veu & leu. L'umoien de quoy ne voulant led'euure demourer incōtortige sachant que cest chose louable aux escriptuains de vouloir amender leurs fautes cōme il est a toutes autres artz & sciences. Et la louange & gloire de dieu premierement comme a escript dauid est louee et glouffie en ses saintes p̄sonnes. Et la louange & gloire de dieu premierement s̄neur de ladicte sainte & aussi du tres noble sang royal & de toutes les dames catholiques par le commandement de feu de Bonne memoire ma dame Anne deux fois royne de france.

Radegund's handwritten *Life*, a gift to the King Charles VIII of France, does not mention an author. However in 1517, Jean Bouchet (1476-1557), *procureur* of Poitiers, writes that Charles VIII had earlier invited him to translate a *Vita* of St. Radegund in French. As he found that text inadequate – “because of my young age and inexperience” he then published his *Histoire et cronique de Clotaire ... et sa tres illustre epouse madame sainte Radegund* dedicated to Anne de Bretagne's daughter, Claude, queen of France (r. 1514-24, digitized version on [Gallica](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1086567/t11image)).



Queen Radegonde's life and death are surrounded by miracles. In sparkling, bright colours and with the royal symbols, the role of the saintly first lady is highlighted in this newly discovered, unpublished manuscript. Illuminated by a Poitevin miniaturist, this manuscript may be the earlier but never found text written by Jean Bouchet as a young man. This manuscript is a unique testimony of French patrimony.





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**La Radegonde royale**

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