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THE LIBRARY AND THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE ABBEY OF ARROUAISE

Until now most of our knowledge of the Augustinian abbey of Arrouaise, situated in Artois, on the border of Vermandois, has been derived from the last prior, Floride Gosse. He published a work, entitled *Histoire de l'abbaye et de l'ancienne congrégation d'Arrouaise*, in 1786, a few years before the French Revolution and the dissolution of the religious houses (1).

There were no important documents relating to Arrouaise in the *Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais*, kept at the *Palais Saint-Vaast* at Arras, when these were destroyed during the First World War (2). Existing documents are rather rare. One of the few manuscripts left is a catalogue of the works and manuscripts of the abbey, at the end of the *Ancien Régime* (3).

This document is practically unknown and unexplored. The reason for this ignorance seems to be the fact that in the inventory of the Archives nationales in Paris, it is only mentioned under the general title of “*catalogues de diverses librairies. 1775-1813*” (4).

Henri Jadart, *conservateur honoraire* of the Reims library, knew the manuscript, by courtesy of Léon Le Grand, *conservateur aux Archives nationales*, and published a short article on *L'ex-libris de l'abbaye d'Arrouaise au diocèse d'Arras* (5).

The catalogue consists of 248 pages, plus 4 which were later inserted. Neither the author, nor the exact date of composition are mentioned. However this happened after 1784, and was continued till the end of the *Ancien Régime*. It seems quite clear that it was composed by the librarian of the abbey, Louis-Auguste Honorez, who is mentioned several times during this period (6).

When the abbey was dissolved and representatives of the new French government came to confiscate its possessions, they found the catalogue a very useful instrument for their plan. They could check very easily which works were still in the library and which had disappeared. Unhappily for them, a great number of works, and especially manuscripts, had

(1) This rare book was printed in Lille, at Léonard Danel's Press.

(2) On p. 4 in the article by H. JADART, quoted further on, it is said that the Arroasian records were destroyed.

(3) Paris, *Archives nationales*, F 17/18.

(4) *État sommaire par séries des documents conservés aux Archives Nationales*, Paris, 1891, p. 86.

(5) Paris, H. Daragon, 1918, 8 p.

(6) On p. 87 we find a work, printed in 1784, written by the “first hand.” The additions are later to 1784. — Arras, *Arch. dép. du Pas-de-Calais*, 2 L, Arrouaise.

vanished. The regular canons had found it profitable to take them with them or to hide them, expecting better times (6b).

So we often find the marginal note "*pas trouvé*" next to some work.

The above mentioned document is divided into an alphabetic and a systematic part. In the first, the manuscripts are in the same alphabetic order as the printed works; in the second, they are grouped under a separate title (p. 157-159). The result is, that some of the manuscripts occur twice. Their total number amounts to twenty five.

(The systematic list)

Notitia operum quae tum manuscripta extant, tum miscellanea nuncupantur.

n° 1030. *Breviarium Arroasianum manuscriptum* (7)

n° 1010. *Sancti Augustini expositiones in psalmos* sans date ni nom d'auteur (sic)

sur velin, 1 v. in-fol

n° 1011. *Legenda* sans date & sur velin in-fol

n° 1012. *Legendarium* sans date & sur velin in-fol

n° 1013. *Coutumes d'Artois par Mr. Hébert, conseiller* sur papier in-fol

n° 1014. *Exposition morale des œuvres de St. Grégoire* sur papier 3 v. in-fol

n° 1015. *Expositio Brunonis episcopi in Pentateuchum* sur velin

1 v. in-fol

n° 1016. *Codex in Canticum Canticorum* sur velin 1 v. in-fol

(Extracts from the alphabetic list)

Breviarium antiquum 1 vol in-16° pas trouvé (p. 17)

Sancti Augustini expositiones in psalmos 1 vol in-fol pas trouvé (p. 4)

Hébert. Coutume d'Artois et remarques faites sur plusieurs articles d'icelle coutume et sur quelques questions de droit et de pratique par maître Hébert, conseiller au Conseil supérieur d'Artois, 1755

1 vol in-fol
repris dans les manuscrits (p. 65)

Brunonis episcopi expositio in Pentateuchum 1 vol in-fol pas trouvé (p. 18)

Codex in Canticum Canticorum 1 vol in- (8)
pas trouvé (p. 26)

(6b) A first visit of the abbey was made by the deputies from 17 to 19 May 1790. At that time they found : 552 volumes in-f°, 569 in-4°, 161 in-8°, 1425 in-12° and 19 manuscripts. On 18 October they sealed the doors and the windows of the library, to prevent robbery (Arras, *Arch. dép. Ib.*). In 1717 the Benedictine historians Martène and Durand stated : « *La bibliothèque est assez peu de chose; il y a pourtant 29 manuscrits assez bons, mais qui ne contenoient rien qui dût nous arrêter* » (*Voyage littéraire de deux religieux Bénédictins de la congrégation de Saint-Maur, Paris, II, p. 59-60*).

(7) In the margin : *saeculo XIII*. This text follows : *Le format de ce manuscrit est un petit in-12° (sic) sur velin, le caractère en est inégal et assez brun mais aisé à lire. Ce livre est terminé par un supplément qui concerne la rubrique où il est dit qu'aux premières vespres de l'office de St. Barnabé on doit chanter les antiennes et les psaumes de la férie ce qui prouve que ce bréviaire est antérieur à l'année 1255 car cette même année, le 22 7bre il fût statué au chapitre général que l'on chanteroit aux premières vespres de St. Barnabé les antiennes des Apôtres et les psaumes de la férie.*

(8) The size is not indicated.

- n° 1017. *Actes de notoriété donnés par les officiers du Conseil d'Artois*, 1755
1 in-fol
- n° 1018. *Missale Romanum* dont les lettres initiales sont peintes et en or, dont la couleur est encore vive, velin,
1 v in-fol
- n° 1019. *Epistolae Sti Damasi (9) ad Hyeronimum* velin, 1 v in-fol
- n° 1020. *Breviarium antiquarum lectio- num*
velin 1 v in-fol
- n° 1021. *Bedae incipit prologus in Actus Apostolorum*
velin 1 v in-fol
- n° 1022. *Bedae expositiones in Parabolas Salomonis*
velin 1 v in-fol
- n° 1023. *Sti Augustini in Evangelium Joannis* velin 1 v in-fol
- n° 1024. *Ancien plein chant* sur papier
1 v in-fol
- n° 1025. *Missale* sur velin, lettres en or
1 v in-fol
- n° 1026. *Sti Hyeronimi in Prophetas* sur velin
1 v in-4°
- n° 1027. *Entretiens de Leandre et d'Eudoxe* papier
1 v in-4°
- n° 1028. *Psalterium Davidicum cujus litterae initiales aureatae* 1 v in-4°
- n° 1029. *De sacramento altaris cum summa de vitiis* 1 v in-4°
- n° 1031. *Diurnale Arroasianum antiquum saeculo XIII* en maroquin
1 v in-36°
- n° 1032. *Formula Beati Bernardi*
velin 1 v in-36°
- [Hébert]: *Actes de notoriété donnés par les officiers du conseil d'Artois touchant l'exécution de plusieurs articles de la coutume*
(p. 65) 1 vol in-fol
- [Hyeronimus.] *Ejusdem epistola ad Damasum papam*
pas trouvé (p. 67) 1 vol in-fol
- [Beda.] *Ejusdem annotationes in Actus Apostolorum*
1 vol in-fol
- [Beda.] *Ejusdem expositio in Parabolas Salomonis*
1 vol in-fol
- V. l'article des manuscrits (p. 11)
- [Augustinus.] *Ejusdem tractatus in Evangelium Joannis* 1 vol in-fol
pas trouvé (p. 4)
- Vetus missale arroasianum* (p. 176)
- [Hyeronimus.] *Ejusdem dissertationes in duodecim prophetas*
pas trouvé (p. 67) 1 vol in-4°
- Entretiens de Leandre et d'Eudoxe touchant les lettres provinciales* 1 vol in-4°
double emploie (p. 47)
- Tractatus de sacramento altaris cum summa de vitiis* pas trouvé (p. 142)
- † *Antiphonier et processionnaire de toutes les fêtes de l'année* (p. 3) 1 vol in-12°
Aliud [breviarium] antiquum
(p. 17) 1 vol in-24°

The greater part are liturgical texts, used at the different Divine Services. These manuscripts are generally older, written on vellum during the Middle Ages.

(9) Here was written *Hyeronimi*. — One of the two items is presumably wrong.

A second group deals with Patristical texts, e.g. St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Bernard. There is no special remark concerning the age of these manuscripts. Most of them are written on parchment.

In a third subdivision we can find juridical manuscripts of practical use : the *Coutumes* of the County and *Actes* of its Council.

A first remark which can be made is the fact that only such a small number of manuscripts was conserved in Gosse's time. However, we have some means of establishing a more complete list of them. The first is the list of works, necessary for the foundation of an abbey in the orders, which were very related to the Arroasian : Cîteaux and Prémontré.

According to their oldest statutes a new foundation could only take place when the white canons disposed of :

psalterium, hymnarium, collectaneum, antiphonarium, graduale, regula, missale (10); as well as these the Cistercians had also to possess :

textus, epistolare, lectionarium, kalendarium and *liber usuum*, in one word the *libri ad diurnum officium* (11). The reform of the Arroasian order in 1233 obliged the abbeys to possess : the Bible, the lives of the Saints, the homilies and the customs of the order (12).

In our list we find only some of these texts : two missals, a psalter and an antiphonary. It is clear, by the short description which is given, that at least the first three are dated from the early centuries of Arrouaise, being written on vellum and ornamented with painted letters.

We have to find an explanation for the fact that only such a small number survived into the eighteenth century.

This can be found in the very great damage, caused by the nearly continuous wars between the French Kingdom and the government of the Netherlands.

Gosse gives an account of six devastations during a period of over two centuries. The first took place a short time before the Treaty of Arras (1435); the others followed in 1475, 1521, 1564, at the end of the sixteenth cent. and finally in 1651 (13).

During the second, which had its origin in the war between King Louis XI and the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Rash, the abbey was "*entièrement dépouillée de ses biens meubles, calices, joyaux et livres*" (14).

The last event was even more terrible : the abbot found the choir-books in such a "*grand délabrement,*" that he feared that nobody could

(10) R. VAN WAEFELGHEM, *Les plus anciens statuts de Prémontré*, in *Analectes de l'ordre de Prémontré*, IX, 1913, p. 33. — H. E. SALTER, *An Arroasian general chapter*, in *English historical Review*, LII, 1937, p. 273.

(11) J. TURK, *Cistercii Statuta Antiquissima*, in *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cistercii*, IV, 1948, p. 16, § III. — The *liber usuum* is not mentioned in J. B. VAN DAMME, *Documenta pro Cisterciensis Ordinis historiae ac juris studio*, Westmalle, 1959, p. 26, § X. — The *libri ad diurnum officium* : TURK, *o. c.*, § II. — VAN DAMME, *o. c.*, § VIII.

(12) GOSSE, *o. c.*, p. 160.

(13) GOSSE, *o. c.*, p. 243, 258, 270, 281, 289 and 303.

(14) *Ib.*, p. 258.

copy or restore them, so he decided to replace the specific Arroasian breviary by the generally adopted Roman one. However a copy of the Arroasian breviary still existed in Gosse's time, as we can see in the catalogue (15).

These changes and the slow agony of Arrouaise as an order, from the fifteenth cent. onwards, are other causes for the lack of typical Arroasian manuscripts.

Later events made the state of things even worse. This can be seen when the library was confiscated. An important part could not be found (16).

But the catalogue is not complete : Gosse used other manuscripts to compose his "*Histoire*". Some of them were seen by F. Locrius, when he wrote his *Chronicon Belgicum* (17). These are : first of all the cartularies, although it is quite normal that they are not mentioned in the catalogue : the oldest was started by the abbot Gautier at the end of the twelfth cent.; he wrote the very interesting historical introduction too (18). The second one, an in-folio, known as cartulary B, dates from the fifteenth cent.; it was a copy of the first, but with additions, up to the time of its composition and with a list of the affiliated houses (19). The third, probably C, contained a list of the spiritual confraternities and a chronology of the provosts and abbots (20).

Cartulary D, containing documents of the sixteenth cent. was used by Gosse too, but he does not give any further details (21). We find also in his work the traces of an ancient martyrology (22), and of a necrology (23).

One or two copies of the Arroasian Customs could be found in the abbey : an older copy, of which we cannot find the date of composition, but which was in any case written before 1470 (24), and a second written in 1477 (25).

Among historical documents Gosse found in the library a voluminous compilation, written in the sixteenth cent. (ca 1596) by Marc Théry; it contained a chronicle of the abbots, and was based on a manuscript by Baudouin de Baines, a fifteenth cent. author. However the latter was already lost at the end of the Ancien Régime (26).

The canon Jean d'Outreman, composing a history of the abbey of St. John at Valenciennes (about 1625), used a book, which contained

(15) *Ib.*, p. 303.

(16) Cf. the marginal note « *pas trouvé* ».

(17) Arras, Riverius, 1616, p. 223-226.

(18) GOSSE, p. 39.

(19) *Ib.*, p. 40. — Amiens, *Arch. dép. de la Somme*, VII H 3.

(20) GOSSE, *o. c.*, p. 66.

(21) *Ib.*, p. 265.

(22) *Ib.*, p. 113, note o.

(23) *Ib.*, e.g. p. 117, note s.

(24) *Ib.*, p. 252 and 501. It is not sure whether the author used this manuscript or not.

(25) *Ib.* p. 60.

(26) *Ib.*, 152.

privilegia Arroasie... acta quoque visitationis, reformationum, electionum antistitum, eorumque confirmationum ac benedictionum et id genus alia complectitur, named elsewhere “*Liber manuscriptus actorum congregationis*” (27).

A second manuscript in-folio was conserved : it contained the text of the *Translatio Sancte Monice*, written by prior Gautier about the middle of the twelfth cent. (1162). Malbrancq, preparing his work *De Morinis* saw this copy, which dates from the beginning of the thirteenth cent., written in a nice letter (28).

We can find traces of some manuscripts till the beginning of this century. The article, written by Jadart, and mentioned above, was based especially on the existence of an Arroasian manuscript, possessed by an architect-archeologist Hector Espauillard from Noisy-le-Sec. It is described by the author as being written in the fifteenth cent. and being of a small size (90×70 mm). Its content is very diverse : the sermons and treatises of the Fathers, e.g. St. Cesarius of Arles, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory. One of the chapters contains the *Formula honeste vite a Beato Bernardo*, which made it possible to identify the work with another, mentioned in the catalogue : *Formula Beati Bernardi*. The size (in-36°) provides us with a second argument (29).

If this seems to be exact, it is clear that the catalogue was not written or composed very carefully, when only one chapter of the work is given as title for the whole manuscript. The provenance of the *Formula* is undoubtedly Arroasian : there is a written ex-libris on f. 2^v, from the sixteenth cent., and a printed one from the eighteenth (30). The names of some other possessors are written at the top or at the end of the manuscript. This proves that after the French Revolution it came into the hands of private persons (31).

When the regional historian Roger Rodière, from Montreuil-sur-Mer, could write in 1915 to Henry Jadart : “*Je possède l'ex-libris dont vous me parlez; il n'est certainement pas très rare*” (32), times had changed completely.

The whole Artesian region was devastated during the War, and we must be happy that some manuscripts have remained. We cannot dispose of any of the manuscripts of the eighteenth cent. catalogue. Only five others seem to be preserved, although a thorough search in private collections could increase this number (33).

(27) Valenciennes, B. M., ms. 562, f. 44^v/46^v.

(28) GOSSE, *o. c.*, p. 95. The manuscript was “*assez bien conservé*”. J. MALBRANCO, *De Morinis*, Tournai, 1639, 111, 1, p. 258/9. — Arras, *Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais*, Collection Barbier, 32, p. 21-42.

(29) H. JADART, *o. c.*, p. 4-5.

(30) *Ib.*, p. 5-7.

(31) *Ib.*, p. 6.

(32) *Ib.*, p. 4.

(33) Rodière's words prove that a great deal of the library came into the hands of private persons.

The first is the cartulary, known as that of Gautier or cartulary A, written at the end of the twelfth cent. and continued in the following.

Abbot Gautier wrote an historical introduction, and classified the charters according to the sender, or the beneficiary, when this was not Arrouaise itself but a dependant priory (34). This manuscript, which measures 252×170 mm, contains 139 pages and is preserved in a wooden and sheepskin cover. It came into the hands of count Arthur de Marsy, who had built up a great collection, together with his brother, and bequeathed it to the *Bibliothèque municipale* of Amiens in 1900 (35).

The second conserved manuscript is the catalogue, on which our article is mainly based.

The third is a copy of the Observances of the order. Two copies were kept at the abbatial library at the end of the eighteenth cent., but neither can be identified with ours, which dates from the first half of the thirteenth cent., and contains the oldest known version of Arroasian statutes : a more precise date must be 1233-1256. This places the work in the same time as the breviary of the list, written before 1255, and the *Diurnale*, also from the thirteenth cent. Is it a mere coincidence that those texts concerning the daily, liturgical and institutional life of the abbey, were all written about the same time? It is possible that the canons took the initiative to copy them at a time when the decisions of the Arroasian general chapters did not any longer cause great changes in the texts. Nevertheless there are still a great number of corrections, additions and changes in the observances (36). About the same time important reforms were introduced into the order. Recently the Paris *Bibliothèque nationale* bought a copy from the last years of the fifteenth cent. (37). The last manuscript is kept at the *Bibliothèque royale* in Brussels. It contains the text of the *Elementarium* and the *Grammatica* by *Papias*, an eleventh cent. author. This work was copied by a certain *Balduin* deacon for a *chanter*, named *John*. The handwriting can be dated at approximately the second half of the twelfth cent. Checking the names in the charters, copied by Gautier, we found them under the following dates :

1142	deacon <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 46 ^r)
1146	deacon <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 81 ^r)
1154	deacon <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 51 ^v)
1165	deacon <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 86 ^r)
1176	chanter <i>John</i>	(f. 67 ^r)
1181	levita <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 106 ^r)
1195	two deacons, named <i>Balduin</i>	(f. 78) (38)

(34) This introduction was edited by GOSSE, *o. c.*, p. 533-549 and by O. HOLDER-EGGER, MG, SS, XV, 2, p. 1117-1125.

(35) Ms. 1077. — A short description can be found in H. MICHEL, *Inventaire sommaire du cartulaire d'Arrouaise*, in *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de la Picardie*, XXVIII, p. 251.

(36) Douai, *Bibliothèque municipale*, Ms. 558.

(37) *Nouv. acq. lat.* 3096.

(38) References to the Amiens ms. 1077.

This confirms the paleographical evidence and points to the middle of the second half of the twelfth cent., the time when a chanter named John and a deacon named Balduin were at Arrouaise, although it would be dangerous to use such common names as John or Balduin as absolute proof (39).

During the first half of the seventeenth cent. the manuscript was in the hands of Balthasar Moretus, grand son of Plantin, and famous printer (died 1641). Afterwards it came into the possession of the Antwerp Jesuits, at that time editors of the *Acta Sanctorum* (from 1643 to 1773), and later on (after the suppression of the order, and as a result of the French Revolution), it was kept at the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris, before coming to Brussels (40). This manuscript is the oldest of all the extant ones. It is a pity that it does not teach us anything about the history of the Arroasian abbey or order, about which the data are so scanty and poor.

In conclusion we may say that, although the abbey was damaged and demolished several times, there were extant at the end of the *Ancien Régime* at least some thirty manuscripts, on different subjects and from different times, but they can be no more than a small fraction of those, which were in the library during the flourishing medieval period. Nowadays only five seem to have survived the troubles and destruction of the past (41).

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(39) Ms. 9041-42. On f. 167^r is written : " *Explicit liber Papiæ, scriptus a Balduino diacono canonico Arroasie Johanne cantore procurante.*"

(40) On the flyleaf at the beginning of the manuscript we find : " *Hunc Ms. codicem Papiæ Elementarium et Grammaticam a Balduino canonico Aroasiensi conscriptum permutationi comparauimus anno MDCXXXVII a clarissimo viro D. Balthasare Moreto,*" and on f. 1^r in the margin : " *Domus professæ soc(ieta)tis Iesu Ant(verpiensis).*"

(41) We thank Prof. Dr. R. C. VAN CAENEGEM for reading the manuscript, and suggesting some corrections.