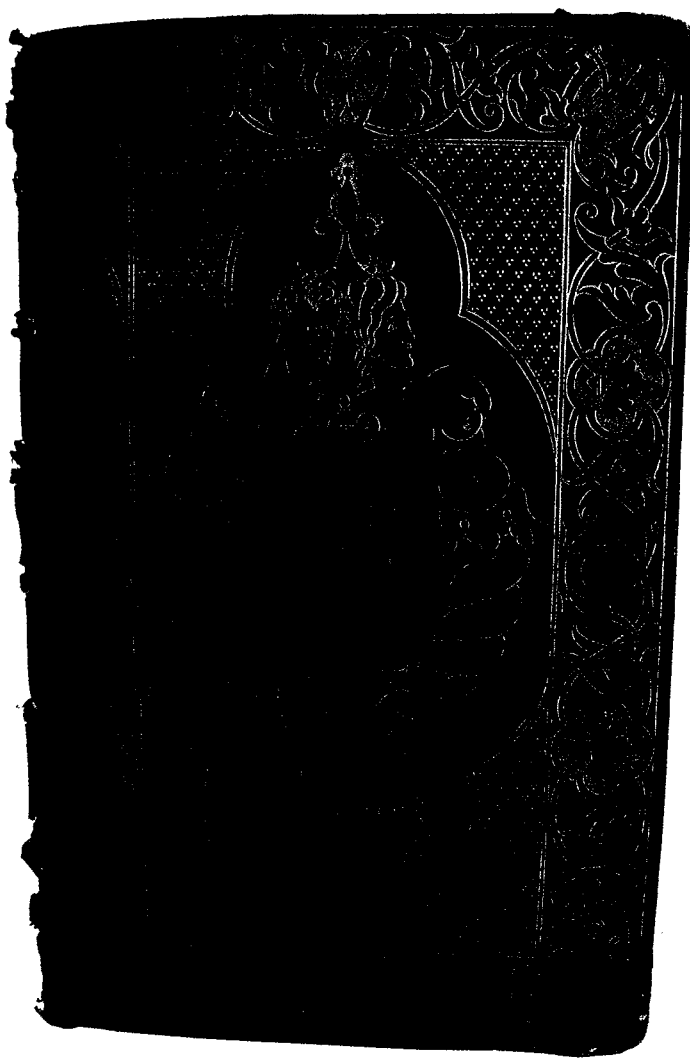


# *Bulletin du bibliophile*



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François Moureau, *La Plume et le plomb. Espaces de l'imprimé et du manuscrit au siècle des Lumières*. Préface de Robert Darnton. Paris, PUPS, 2006, 728 p.

The title of François Moureau's important book echoes that of the introductory study he wrote for *De bonne main: la communication manuscrite au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, Universitas; Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1993, p. 5-16). Indeed the substance of that earlier essay has passed into the "Avant-propos" (p. 11-23) of the present volume. By an interesting coincidence 1993 also saw the appearance of the late Harold Love's *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press), which itself drew on a generation or more of specialist scholarly endeavour as it projected the whole phenomenon of the survival of scribal culture for centuries after Gutenberg into well-deserved prominence in the English-speaking world. The point is that parallel researches have been going on for a long time in France and her neighbours and that François Moureau has played a leading role in them, not least through his editorship of *Répertoire des nouvelles à la main: dictionnaire de la presse manuscrite clandestine XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1999). In a world in which people are too often ignorant of what is being produced in languages and cultures other than their own it is essential to pay close attention to major contributions that have, implicitly or explicitly, an international dimension.

Moureau, whose published work now extends over nearly four decades, has an exceptionally wide knowledge of eighteenth-century French literature and its context. He is also a quite remarkable collector, whose own printed books and manuscripts provide almost all the black-and-white illustrations liberally scattered

through his text. Inevitably, then, this is a book directed to a specialist audience. However, others ought to make the effort to read what is not and cannot be an easy and straightforward synthesis. In Moureau's view there is much that we do not know and, for want of sources of many kinds, can scarcely hope to discover about the ways in which literary and other compositions of the eighteenth century reached their readers.

The "Avant-propos" and a "Postface" (p. 657-670) frame an argument that is presented in thirty-four separate chapters divided into five parts. These deal successively with: facets of the world of the book in France as regulated in theory by Saugrain's *Code de la librairie* of 1744 (the co-existence of manuscripts and printed books and pamphlets, the problems of identifying authors and booksellers, reprints and piracies, illustrations, translations, re-editions of much earlier works, and the evidence for the contents of private libraries); the diverse forms of censorship before 1789; journalism, the press and, notably, *nouvelles à la main* (manuscript newsletters); the fate of literary manuscripts; and, finally, a number of special cases of writers, readers and collectors (La Rochefoucauld, Antoine de la Roche, Rochebrune, Frederick the Great and the abbé Rive). Much of this takes up earlier research done by the author, but the material is shaped and arranged to give a sense of continuity, if not, it should be stressed, of exhaustivity. The chapters are of varying lengths, and some of them do not go much beyond extended illustrations or case-studies related to the main themes. The volume is com-

plemented by a list of printed sources (p. 695-700) and 172 illustrations (p. 701-728). Footnotes not only provide the opportunity to follow up wide-ranging investigations and libraries outside France.

*La Plume et le plomb* is a valuable addition to the knowledge of the world of the book in print and manuscript in eighteenth-century France. The authority and enablement of the work can easily afflict literary history that is not grounded in the complex physicalities of communication in the Revolution. Thus sceptical about the "destinée" manuscript authorities were more controlling satirical than in persecuting and occasional read-tises. The market for was much wider, and one gives the matter was determined by could be cheaper and short texts like news handwritten copies and practised labour distribution channels were reason alone the cost and print, despite of the latter, continue of the eighteenth-century. All of this is set out in detail of the thirty-four

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plemented by a list of manuscript and printed sources (p. 671-694), an "Index nominum" (p. 695-718) and a list of the 172 illustrations (p. 719-725). Abundant footnotes not only give cross-references that tie up threads, but also offer readers the opportunity to follow up Moureau's wide-ranging investigations in archives and libraries outside his own.

*La Plume et le plomb* is based on precise knowledge of the workings of the trades in print and manuscript in eighteenth-century France. This gives the book its authority and enables it to step away from idle speculation and lazy clichés, which can easily afflict literary and philosophical history that is not grounded in a sense of the complex physical and economic realities of communication in France before the Revolution. Thus François Moureau is sceptical about the stress placed on "clandestine" manuscripts and shows that the authorities were more concerned about controlling satirical political pamphlets than in persecuting the obscure authors and occasional readers of atheistic treatises. The market for scribal publications was much wider, and, not surprisingly if one gives the matter some thought, it was determined by economic factors. It could be cheaper and easier to produce short texts like news-sheets in dozens of handwritten copies than to print them, and practised labour and organized distribution channels were available. For this reason alone the cohabitation of script and print, despite the preponderance of the latter, continued to be a feature of the eighteenth-century literary scene. All of this is set out and buttressed in the detail of the thirty-four chapters.

Of particular interest to bibliophiles are the chapters devoted to sale catalogues and the fate of libraries (I, X and 2, V). There is a basis in Moureau's paper "Clan-

destinité et ventes publiques: le statut du manuscrit" in *De bonne main* (p. 143-175), but here and in the whole of part 5 there is visible mastery of the mechanisms of dealing in old books. Needless to say this is a perspective that is often missing from work in book history.

The writing is anything but pedestrian. The author is capable of summing up major points in a sharp phrase. For example, in treating the psychological element in the pricing of newsletters for the carriage trade, he points to German princes' readiness to demonstrate their distinction by paying way above anything related to the cost of production. It would be easy enough to find instances in other times and places of a similar "impôt levé sur le snobisme" (p. 23).

Although one can agree that an approach that stays close to the existing documents is a necessity dictated by gaps in the archives (p. 657), the present decade continues to bring new discoveries or different ways of exploiting forgotten and neglected material. The dictionaries of trade personnel being produced in France and the catalogues of sales and booksellers' lists being edited in various places do offer us other possibilities. Moureau knows that he has not covered everything, and it would be easy to suggest the circulation in print and in manuscript of alchemical texts in the eighteenth century as another trail to follow. One of the major relevant collectors, the abbé Sépher, makes an appearance in another context (especially p. 322-325) as the owner of heterodox manuscripts. The recent appearance in a catalogue of the Librairie Pierre-Adrien Yvinec of a manuscript version of the Rothelin sale sheds further light on the century's practices.

The volume has, inevitably, other lacunae. A propos of Libri (p. 210) it may

have been useful to cite P. Alessandra Maccioni Ruju and Marco Mostert, *The Life and Times of Guglielmo Libri (1802-1869): scientist, patriot, scholar, journalist and thief: a nineteenth-century story* (Hilversum, Verloren Publishers, 1995), but such omissions are rare. There are some literals, mostly easy to correct except where a promised page number has not been

supplied. The illustrations are – unavoidably? – a little home-made in this age of brilliantly decorated catalogues. However, these are minor points compared with the solidity and the pertinence of François Moureau's demonstrations. Book historians, in particular, will ignore *La Plume et le plomb* at their peril.

Wallace Kirsop

*L'Enfer de la Bibliothèque. Éros au secret*, sous la direction de Marie-Françoise Quignard et Raymond-Josué Seckel. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2007, 460 p., ill.

À bien des égards, l'Enfer n'est pas ce que l'on croit. Du moins, l'Enfer de la Bibliothèque nationale. S'il abrite textes et images que la censure aurait poursuivis comme « contraire aux bonnes mœurs », notion souvent variable avec les époques et difficile à définir de façon précise, il n'entretient avec elle aucun lien institutionnel. La mention « Enfer » est apparue dans les catalogues sous la monarchie de Juillet; devenue ensuite la cote attribuée à certains ouvrages de la Réserve, supprimée en 1969, rétablie en 1983, elle signale les œuvres qui font l'objet d'un rangement et de conditions de communication particuliers suivant des critères propres à la Bibliothèque. Parce que l'écrasante majorité des éditeurs d'écrits et images « contraires aux bonnes mœurs » ont toujours préféré prévenir les foudres de la censure et publier de façon clandestine, les œuvres ne sont pas parvenues à la Bibliothèque par le Dépôt légal; ce sont les saisies policières, les dons, les achats qui sont à l'origine de la plupart des entrées dans la collection. On pourrait donc dire que l'Enfer a été le sauveur de la littérature clandestine, si ce n'était faire bon marché des nom-

breuses collections privées qui se sont vouées parallèlement à la même tâche. L'accueil offert par la Bibliothèque ne va toutefois pas sans conditions qui mêlent toujours préoccupations morales et pratiques. L'évolution des règles régissant l'admission dans l'Enfer et la communication aux lecteurs suit celle de la censure et des mentalités: aux périodes de rigueur morale et de durcissement de la répression correspond l'aggravation des restrictions d'accès au fonds par le double effet de l'alignement sur la politique officielle et d'un renforcement des précautions contre le vol qui n'est pas qu'un alibi: la rareté rend les convoitises plus ardentes. Aujourd'hui, une place en Enfer doit se mériter: il faut que l'ouvrage se distingue par une qualité bibliophilique particulière; sinon, il se noiera dans le tout-venant de la production littéraire, signe d'une époque devenue plus indifférente à son contenu.

L'histoire de l'Enfer, dans le récit qu'en fait Marie-Françoise Quignard, rythme le catalogue des ouvrages présentés lors de l'exposition organisée de décembre 2007 à mars 2008 par la Bibliothèque nationale de France. L'érudition des

256 notices, son catalogue apprographique com et poursuivi par d'une réflexion et aux photogra un vaste panor imprimée érotiq trois siècles. La raît dans toute s ouvrages « licenc la transgression cfectue dans une c le lecteur: fantai et des pseudony double sens des r connus, exagérati inattendue de m décor, etc. Avec s gresse de la rech pas à la violence e destructrice du dé Toutefois, les en Bibliothèque ro rééditions des ro siècle assurent e l'activité d'éditeu ou belges, et qu d'inspirer toute des disques pour tant en mouvemen

Bernard Joubert  
*Œuvres complètes de 1949*  
1213 p., ill., in

En 1949, les dé s'accordent exce voter une loi visan des lectures jugée. avoir organisé la cations « princip