

## ‘Un étrange moyen de séduction’

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“Un étrange moyen de séduction”: Anne de Graville’s *Chaldean Histories* and her Role in  
Literary Culture at the French Court in the Early Sixteenth Century<sup>1</sup>

In 1498 in Rome, Anniius of Viterbo, published his *Antiquities*, a history of the world around the time of the Flood that purported to present the works of ancient authors previously thought lost. Anniius’ motivation in creating the *Antiquities* was to defend the supremacy of the Roman Church, to promote his own home town of Viterbo, and to ‘prove that Greco-Roman consensus about ancient history had been a malicious forgery’.<sup>2</sup> Although the text, written in Latin, was quickly denounced as a hoax by some leading writers of the early sixteenth century, Anniius’ work proved immensely popular, especially in France where several editions were published between 1509 and 1515. Moreover, Anniius’ text was mined by Jean Lemaire des Belges for his *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye*, the three books of which were published between 1511 and 1513 and dedicated to three leading female rulers and patrons of the time, Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, Claude of France, future wife of Francis I, and her mother, the current Queen of France, Anne of Brittany.<sup>3</sup> Despite the popularity of the *Antiquities*, it has been noted that ‘there were no literal translations’ of the text outside Italy, and the first of these only appeared in 1543.<sup>4</sup> However, parts of Anniius’ text are to be found in French translation in a little-known, early sixteenth-century manuscript made for Anne de Graville (c. 1490-1540). Anne de Graville was a bibliophile and author in her own right who became lady-in-waiting to Queen Claude in the early sixteenth century. Although well-known in her day, Anne de Graville has been somewhat overlooked by modern scholars of women’s literary interests. Therefore, in addition to bringing this early and unacknowledged translation of Anniius’ text to light, my study also seeks further our knowledge of Anne’s literary interests and to consider how the

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Professor Emma Cayley and Professor Naomi Standen for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Walter J. Stephens, ‘From Berossos to Berossus Chaldaeus: The Forgeries of Anniius of Viterbo and Their Fortune’, in Johannes Haubold et al. (eds), *The World of Berossos: Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium on The Ancient Near East between Classical and Ancient Oriental Traditions, Hatfield College, Durham, 7-9 July 2010* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag: 2013), 277-89 (278-80). See also Anthony Grafton, ‘Invention of Tradition and Traditions of Invention in Renaissance Europe: The Strange Case of Anniius of Viterbo’, in Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (eds), *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 8-36.

<sup>3</sup> Marian Rothstein, ‘Jean Lemaire des Belges’ *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troyes*: Politics and Unity’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 3 (1990), 593-609 (594-95).

<sup>4</sup> Stephens, ‘Berossus Chaldaeus: Counterfeit and Fictive Editors of the Early Sixteenth Century’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1979, 209 and 4.

presentation of parts of Annius' text in illuminated manuscript form helped her to craft her place as woman writer at the French court.<sup>5</sup>

I begin by examining the immediate context of the production of Anne's *Chaldean Histories* as a highly personalised gift from her husband Pierre. I then analyse the manuscript's contents in relation to the emerging popularity of Annius' text in France and the production of Lemaire des Belges' *Illustrations*, before considering broader, courtly interest in the translation of ancient sources and Anne's own literary tastes. Finally, I explore the manuscript's decoration, particularly the representation of Anne in the frontispiece by a leading artist who worked for other patrons at the French court. Thus, this article will suggest that the *Chaldean Histories* was not only designed as an amatory token, but was specifically intended to flatter Anne's intellect and to situate her – visually and textually – in the courtly, literary context in which she would later take a more prominent role. As such, I show that the manuscript may also have played a key role in shaping her interests in books and her pursuits as an author. More broadly, then, this interdisciplinary study of the *Chaldean Histories* contributes to the growing field of women's roles in literary and manuscript culture at the French court in the sixteenth century.

### **Anne de Graville: Author and Bibliophile**

Scholarly interest in the part played by aristocratic women as readers, writers and bibliophiles in late medieval and early modern France is now intense; research has revealed much about the works, patronage and collections of leading figures such as Christine de Pizan, Anne of Brittany, Catherine d'Amboise, Louise of Savoy and Margaret of Navarre.<sup>6</sup> Anne de Graville, the third daughter of Louis Malet de Graville, Admiral of France, and Marie de Balsac has, however, been largely overlooked in modern scholarship, despite the fact that she produced two literary works for Queen Claude (1499-1524) and built up a substantial library of her own. Some twenty-five manuscripts can be placed in Anne's possession on the basis of bindings, coats of arms, or inscriptions: some of these she inherited from her parents, others she commissioned or purchased second hand.<sup>7</sup> The two works written at the behest of Claude

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<sup>5</sup> This article forms part of a much wider, monograph study into Anne's library, her literary works and cultural milieu.

<sup>6</sup> See for example the essays in *Patronnes et mécènes en France à la Renaissance*, ed. by Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2007) and in *Livres et lectures des femmes en Europe entre moyen âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Some of Anne's manuscripts are traceable because they passed to her daughter Jeanne, who married Claude d'Urfé, where they ended up in the d'Urfé library, see André Vernet, 'Les manuscrits de Claude d'Urfé (1501–1558) au château de La Bastie', *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, (1976), 120, 81-97. Mathieu Deldicque has recently argued that manuscripts thought to have been

were the *Rondeaux*, a reworking of Alain Chartier's *Belle Dame sans Mercy* (1424), and a rhymed version in French of Boccaccio's *Teseida* (c. 1330), entitled *Le Beau roman des deux amants Palamon et Arcita et de la belle et sage Emilia*.<sup>8</sup> These works have recently been studied for their engagement with and contribution to literary trends at the French court, particularly the *querelle des femmes*.<sup>9</sup> However, the manuscripts that constituted Anne's library have received practically no attention in terms of what they can add to our knowledge of noble women's reading and collecting habits in the early sixteenth century or what they can reveal about the ways that Anne interacted with, or imaged herself in, her manuscripts, as has been the case for other female readers.<sup>10</sup> By focusing here on Anne's copy of the *Chaldean Histories* I aim to pursue some of these lines of enquiry in microcosm.

As a gift from her husband Pierre de Balsac, the *Chaldean Histories* has a singular status amongst Anne's books, being neither a work of her own, nor a personal acquisition, nor an inherited item. The manuscript has, over time, acquired the epithet 'the book of love', based not only on certain inscriptions and declarations in the text but also on the fact that Anne's union with her maternal cousin went against the wishes of her father.<sup>11</sup> Their marriage has dominated the few accounts of Anne's life, turning it into a tale of elopement, disinheritance and reconciliation.<sup>12</sup> However, despite the book containing evidence of

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commissioned by Anne should in fact be linked to her mother. See his article 'Bibliophiles de mère en fille: Marie de Balsac († 1504) et Anne de Graville', forthcoming in a collection edited by Anne-Marie Legaré and Cynthia J. Brown. I wish to thank Mathieu Deldicque for sharing his findings and article with me.

<sup>8</sup> The *Rondeaux* are preserved in one manuscript copy, Paris, BnF, ms fr. 2235; the *Beau roman* survives in six manuscripts: Paris, Arsenal, ms 5116 (presentation copy for the queen); Paris, BnF, ms fr. 1397; BnF, ms fr. 25441; BnF, ms n. a. fr. 6513; BnF, ms n. a. fr. 719; Chantilly, Bibliothèque du château, MS 1570 (513).

<sup>9</sup> See Mawy Bouchard, 'Le roman "épique": l'exemple d'Anne de Graville', *Études françaises*, 32 (1996), 99-107; idem, 'Les Belles [in]fidèles ou la traduction de l'ambiguïté masculine: les *Rondeaux* d'Anne de Graville', *Neophilologus*, 88 (2004), 189-202; Catherine M. Müller, 'Jeanne de la Font et Anne de Graville, translatrices de la *Théséide* de Boccace au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *D'une écriture à l'autre: les femmes et la traduction sous l'Ancien Régime*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Beaulieu (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2004), 187-210 and Elizabeth L'Estrange, 'Re-Presenting Emilia in the Context of the *querelle des femmes*: Text and Image in Anne de Graville's *Beau roman*', in Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (eds), *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French Culture* (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2015), 187-207. On the *querelle* more generally, see Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading beyond Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Helen Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France (1440-1538)* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> See the references in note 6 above; in addition to Deldicque, 'Bibliothèque de mère en fille', Anne is discussed by Myra Orth, 'Dedicating Women: Manuscript Culture in the French Renaissance and the cases of Catherine d'Amboise and Anne de Graville', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 1 (1997), 17-47.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the prologue, epilogue and decoration to be discussed below, the manuscript also contains the added inscriptions 'Tout pour le mieux, vostre bon cousin et amy, c'est moi' (fol. iv) and another presumed to be by Anne 'Memoire que je me souviens de ce qui m'avint le samedi huitième novembre, lissant dedans mon lit à Annet' (fol. ir).

<sup>12</sup> For a somewhat romanticised account of their elopement and Anne's disinheritance, see Maxime de Montmorand, *Une femme poète du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Anne de Graville: sa famille, sa vie, son œuvre, sa postérité* (Paris: Picard, 1917), 62-85. The *Chaldean Histories* is also discussed in relation to Anne's marriage in Paul

Pierre's admiration and love for Anne, her biographers and previous cataloguers of the manuscript have suggested that the contents – the supposed historical writings of Berosus the Chaldean – would appear to be at odds with the notion of a 'book of love'. In his biography of Anne, Maxime de Montmorand called the book 'le singulier cadeau à faire à la femme aimée, et l'étrange moyen de séduction!'.<sup>13</sup> Yet Pierre's decision to offer Anne this particular text has also been taken as evidence of Anne's erudition and learning. Therefore, it is precisely the combination of Anne and Pierre's story, this choice of text and its presentation, and Anne's literary interests that will be analysed here in order to situate the *Chaldean Histories* both within her personal collection and within the wider trends of her courtly milieu.

### **The Manuscript of the *Chaldean Histories* and its Source**

Anne's manuscript of the *Chaldean Histories* has attracted little attention, despite being on deposit at the British Library as part of the Thomas Phillipps collection from 1949 until it was withdrawn for sale in 2006.<sup>14</sup> In 2006, the manuscript was sold by Christie's, but reappeared on the market again in 2014 at Les Enluminures, Paris, where it formed part of the exhibition '*Au parler que m'aprist ma mere*': Flowering of Medieval French Literature.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript consists of seventy-seven folios written in a rounded, humanistic hand and opens with a full-page miniature in which a Renaissance-style architectural frame surrounds the depiction of a woman dressed in a sumptuous red dress with a black headdress reminiscent of the Breton style popularised by Anne of Brittany at the French court in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century (fig. 1). The woman is seated on a large chair behind which is a blue, tent-like structure; two women lead a group of other men and women into the space behind her chair. The central figure extends her right hand towards a black book that is being offered from the left hand side of the image by a disembodied hand, directed by a small putto that emerges from a swirl of blue clouds. The banderol that unfurls between the book and the top of the woman's chair bears the words IEN GARDE UN LEAL (j'en garde un leal), an

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Durrieu, 'Les manuscrits à peintures de la bibliothèque de Sir Thomas Phillipps à Cheltenham', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes*, 50 (1889), 381-342 (430).

<sup>13</sup> de Montmorand, *Une femme poète*, 69.

<sup>14</sup> The manuscript was acquired by the book collector Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872) and deposited on indefinite loan at the British Library by Phillipps' descendant Mr Alan G. Fenwick and the Trustees of the Fenwick settlement. My thanks to Dr Arnold Hunt of the British Library for this information. For further details on the manuscript's ownership history, see the entry in '*Au parler que m'aprist ma mere*': Flowering of Medieval French Literature, ed. Sandra Hindman and Ariane Bergeron-Foote (London: Paul Holberton, 2014), 181; 184.

<sup>15</sup> Paris, 2-26 April 2014 and Chicago 13-20 May 2014. I am very grateful to Sandra Hindman and Charlotte Stovell of Les Enluminures for allowing me to study and photograph this manuscript in detail.

anagram of ‘Anne de Graville’ which is found in several other manuscripts associated with Anne.<sup>16</sup> Another banderol around the book reads NON PLUS and [A] AMOUR, and at the top and bottom of the architectural frame further inscriptions read NON PLUS; the Graville arms, *de gueules à trois fermaux d’or*, are found at the bottom of the frame surrounded by two putti who hold another scroll with the words A AUTRE NON.

On the facing page, the text opens with the words ‘A vous mademoiselle Anne de Graville [*sic*]’ and the border is decorated with banderols that repeat the NON PLUS, A AUTRE NON and A AMOUR mottos around large letter As, suggesting a pun on the preposition *à* and the first letter of Anne’s name (fig. 1). This same decoration is repeated at chapter divisions in the manuscript (fig. 2), and the NON PLUS and A AUTRE NON mottos also appear at subdivisions in the text where they surround the letter A in the margins (fig. 3). I will return to this decoration and the dedicatory text below, but here we can conclude that the woman represented in the miniature is Anne herself and that the book she is receiving from the disembodied hand symbolises the very book in which she is represented.

In the 2006 Christie’s sale notice, the manuscript is described as being by ‘Berosus (fl. 300 BC)’ and as being ‘a French translation by Pierre de Balsac [...] presumably made from the Latin translation printed in Rome in 1498’.<sup>17</sup> The *Flowering of Medieval French Literature* catalogue notes more accurately that ‘[t]he present “translation” or rather adaptation is likely based on the Latin work of Giovanni Nanni (Annius de Viterbo, 1432-1502), *Commentaria fratris Joannis Annii Viterbiensis super opera diversorum auctorum...*, published for the first time in Rome, 1498 and published again under the titles *Berosus...de Antiquitatibus*, Paris, 1509, and *Berosus Babilonicus...*, Paris 1510’.<sup>18</sup> Further clarification is needed, however, concerning the relationship of Annii’s text to Anne’s manuscript.

Annius of Viterbo, the author of the *Antiquities*, was a Dominican monk who, in 1493, ‘began a systematic program of revising the history of the world, of Italy, and of his hometown, Viterbo’. The *Antiquities* were part of this programme and consisted of eleven ‘ancient’ books that he had supposedly re-discovered and which, in some editions, were

<sup>16</sup> In other manuscripts, *garde* is usually spelled *garde*, thus avoiding a redundant ‘u/v’. Other manuscripts containing this motto include three copies of the *Beau roman* (BnF, mss fr. 25441 and naf 6513, and Chantilly 513), the surviving copy of the *Rondeaux* (BnF, f. fr. 2253), Anne’s copy of the *Triumphs* of Petrarch (BnF, ms fr. 22541) and the *Voyages* of Marco Polo (BnF, Arsenal 3511).

<sup>17</sup> Christie’s sales notice available online: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/sculptures-statues-figures/berosus-chaldean-history-in-4728662-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=4728662&sid=6f9cf61d-5fd8-4ae8-bac2-f0c304e2fee0> (accessed November 2014). Montmorand’s discussion of the text notes the existence of Annii of Viterbo’s text but declares that it has ‘aucune authenticité’ and seems to assume that there is no link between this text and the text in Anne’s manuscript which he implies might have been translated from Greek; see *Une femme poète*, 68, n. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Flowering of Medieval French Literature*, 180.

presented with detailed commentary, ‘coordinat[ing] them with the most authoritative historians of antiquity, both pagan and Judeo-Christian’.<sup>19</sup> Walter Stephens has noted that the ‘books’ attributed to the Babylonian priest Berossus are the most important of those in the *Antiquities* because they ‘contain [...] genealogies and lists of kings and events from three generations before the flood to the founding of Troy’.<sup>20</sup> Annius was intent on proving that Italy, and not Greece, was at the origin of ancient history: drawing on the *Chronicle* of Jacobus de Voragine in which he claimed that ‘Italy had been colonized soon after Noah’s Flood by sons of Noah’s great-grandson Nimrod’ and on the works of Flavius Josephus in which traces of the original Berossus had been preserved, he sought to restore universal history ‘to its pristine, truthful state’.<sup>21</sup> In doing so, he not only put Italy at the centre of the story but, wittingly or otherwise, also filled in the gaps in the early history of many other European countries, making his work extremely popular amongst historiographers whose nationalistic interests often involved proving the Trojan origins of their people.<sup>22</sup>

Despite a series of condemnations from leading commentators including Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples exposing Annius’ work as a forgery, at least nineteen editions of the *Antiquities* were published between 1498 and 1612. The text was particularly well received in France where several editions were published between 1509 and 1515, and these by leading humanist printers including Geoffroy Tory and Geoffroy de Marnef. The first of these French editions reproduced the supposedly ‘ancient’ texts only. It was only in 1512 and 1515 that an edition with the full commentary – essentially a reprint of the Roman 1498 *Editio princeps* – was published by Jose Bade and Jehan Petit in Paris.<sup>23</sup>

Just before and during this flurry of publications, Margaret of Austria’s court historiographer, Jean Lemaire des Belges, was writing his *Illustrations de Gaule et Singularitez de Troyes*. He made substantial use of the *Antiquities* in developing his oeuvre which was eventually published between 1511 and 1513, by which time he had left Margaret’s court and begun working for Anne of Brittany. Stephens notes that no vernacular translations of the *Antiquities* were made before the mid-sixteenth century (and then these were into Italian) and that Lemaire des Belges’ *Illustrations* thus became ‘the most widely-

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<sup>19</sup> Stephens, ‘From Berossos to Berossus Chaldaeus’, p. 278.

<sup>20</sup> Stephens, ‘Counterfeit and Fictive Editors’, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Stephens, ‘From Berossos to Berossus Chaldaeus’, 278-79; and ‘Counterfeit and Fictive Editors’, 26.

<sup>22</sup> R. E. Asher, *National Myths in Renaissance France: Francus, Samothés and the Druids* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 49-50. See also Grafton, ‘Invention of Traditions’, 15, who notes the appeal of the *Antiquities* to Spanish, French, English and Germans.

<sup>23</sup> On the condemnations and editions, see Stephens, ‘Counterfeit and Fictive Editors’, 6 and the list in the bibliography.

read “translation” of Anniius’ text’, to the point that it ‘nearly eclipsed the original’.<sup>24</sup> There is no denying the popularity of Lemaire des Belges’ text, especially since it went through several printed editions.<sup>25</sup> However, close consideration of Anne’s manuscript suggests that the French text of her *Chaldean Histories* is based closely – at least in parts – on the Latin *Editio princeps* and that it likely predates Lemaire des Belges’ *Illustrations*. Anne’s manuscript may therefore provide early evidence of the popularity of Anniius’ text in France as well as another instance of the text being transformed for an aristocratic female reader. Furthermore, as a highly personalised copy, the *Chaldean Histories* may also reveal something of how Anne’s own literary interests in “translation” were shaped and how she and Pierre sought to craft their place within French intellectual and courtly circles.

### **The Text of the *Chaldean Histories* and the Latin Original**

Comparison of the main text of Anne’s manuscript with the Latin original indicates that it is a relatively faithful rendering into French of the five books of Berossus ‘published’ by Anniius in his *Antiquities*. It is also evident from the prologue that the translator had access to the *Commentaries* that were included in the first, 1498, edition and then again in the editions printed in Paris in 1512 and 1515. It is worth noting here that the translator of the text remains anonymous. Durrieu suggested in 1889 that it might be Pierre himself but it has since been assumed that Pierre commissioned someone else to carry out the work on his behalf.<sup>26</sup> Here I use the term translator when referring to the way the Latin has been rendered into French, and the term author in reference to the sections addressed to Anne and presumed to be in Pierre’s voice.

The text begins with a panegyric praising Anne de Gravelle, her virtue and her honour, and an explanation of the author’s reasons for undertaking the work:

A ceste cause Mademoiselle, pour ce que vous estes pleine de bon et gentil Esprit, remplye de vertuz et de toutes celles que j’ay veu la plus des plus en toutes bonnes choses louables parfaicte et acomplye qui prenez plaisir et delectation en tout ce en quoy les gens de bonne sorte doibvent faire. Aussi pour ce que contre toute raison divine naturele et humaine l’en vous donne du deul ennuy et tribulation beaucoup et sans cause afin de donner à vos yeulx un

<sup>24</sup> Stephens, ‘Counterfeit and Fictive Editors’, 209 and 4.

<sup>25</sup> On the complicated genesis of the *Illustrations*, see Jacques Abélard, *Les Illustrations de Gaule et singularitéz de Troye de Jean Lemaire de Belges : Etude des éditions, genèse de l’œuvre* (Geneva: Droz, 1976), 13.

<sup>26</sup> Durrieu, ‘Les manuscrits à peintures’, 420; Montmorand, *Une femme poète*, 67-68; *Flowering of French Medieval Literature*, 174-75.



peu de recreation et soulager vostre cueur par douce consolation, j'ay bien voulu prendre un peu de pene qui m'a esté grand plaisir à reduyre ceste presente hystoire Berosyene nouvellement de langue Caldayque en latine translatee et l'escripre en langue vulgaire pour honneur et amour de vous. Et si toust qu'ay commencé à mectre la main à l'euvre, le livre qui devant moi estoit c'est [*sic*] grandement humilié et en faisant une humble requeste m'a trèsfort pryé que je le voulusse à vous du tout vouher et dedyer comme à celle à qui il est dheu et apartient par excellence toutes gentilz et meilleurs choses. Combien que celle-cy ne soit telle ne digne d'estre par vous estimée. Neantmoins, Amour qui est conducteur de l'ouvrage, souverain gouverneur des cueurs humains, a pris la dicte requeste et de sa propre main ainsi qu'on fait es supplications Romaines ha mis *fiat* c'est à dire soit faict dont ay esté tresjoyeux. Et en obtemperant et obeyssant à luy je vous en fait don et present, mais pour bien entendre la matière et qui en elle est contenue il est à noter et scavoïr que Berosus acteur de ce livre, fust du pays et nacion de babiloïne et de dignité Caldayque [...].<sup>27</sup>

The importance of this exposé, particularly in relation to the apparent 'ennuy et tribulation beaucoup' suffered by Anne, will be discussed in more detail below, but here it is worth noting that it is at the end of this passage, where Berosus' origins are mentioned, that the translator begins to rely upon the Latin commentaries written by Annius. Thus, for example, the French text continues

[...] Berosus acteur de ce livre fust du pays et nacion de Babiloyne et de dignité Caldayque ainsi que racompte Iosephus Ancien historiographe hebraïque en un livre qu'il a composé encontre un orateur appelé Appion ou premier livre de l'antiqueté judaïque. Et fust le dicte Berosus prestre.<sup>28</sup>

This passage renders into French the more concise Latin opening of the *Praefatio incipit*:

Berosus fuit patria Babylonicus: et dignitate Chaldaeus:  
 ut Iosephus contra appionem grammaticum: & in primo de  
 Antiquitate Iudaica significat. Fuit ergo sacerdos: [...].<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Fols 4v-6r. Apostrophes and punctuation have been added, as well as final é and the italics for *fiat*. I would like to thank Dr Helen Swift and Professor Rosalind Brown-Grant for their help in interpreting this text; any errors are entirely my own.

<sup>28</sup> Fol. 6v.

However, despite the translator's reliance on the Latin, he also inserts passages that are not to be found in Anniius' commentary. For instance, shortly after stating that the role of priests in Babylon was to keep written, public, records of the deeds of great kings and princes, the translator changes the final part of the Latin original which refers to Metasthenes, as a comparison of the two shows:

Quare fuit notarius & scriba publicus: qua penes sacerdotes solos erat publica fides annalium : temporum gesta & regum: ut author est Methasthenes in libro de Judiciis temporum.<sup>30</sup>

En ce temps là le vray office des prestres estoit de reciter au vray et rediger par escript les annales, c'est à dire les grans faits et aults gestes qui par chacun en avenoyent du temps de leurs Roys, princes et autres grans personages en quels l'on adjoustoit pleine et entiere foy comme es scribez et tabellions publiez. Tout ainsi comme l'on fait aujourduy est hystoires et croniques de France.<sup>31</sup>

A couple of folios later, having followed the Latin description of the subjects of the five books that will follow the preface, the French version adds:

Et l'on pourra en ceste petite hystoire veritablement congnoistre et percevoir que en France plus de mille ans devant noustre Faranundus [i.e. Pharamond] que nous estimons premier Roy des françoys en y a eu plusieurs autres desquelz le premier fust Samotes fils de Jafet fils de l'ancien père Noa et aussy pareillement en aultres Royaulmes et naciones comme l'on verra.<sup>32</sup>

The translator therefore makes a direct link between the role of Babylonian priests like Berossus and the writers of contemporary French 'hystoires et croniques' as record keepers of important events and rulers. Furthermore, he goes on to stress the current book's value in correcting the history of the French people by showing how their ancestry can be traced back beyond the first presumed king of the Franks, Pharamond, to Noah himself. As the French

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<sup>29</sup> References to the Latin are from the commentated edition, *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII* (Paris: Jean Petit, 1515), available on Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k526066> (Accessed November 2014). Page references are to the numbers generated by the PDF from Gallica; here, 222.

<sup>30</sup> *Antiquitatum variarum*, 222.

<sup>31</sup> Fols 6r-v.

<sup>32</sup> Fol. 8r.

prologue continues, it deviates further from the Latin text so much so that it summarises events relating to writers and characters not mentioned in Annius' prologue, including Ovid, Helen of Troy, and Hercules. However, the French translator is still careful to render Annius' criticism of *Graecia mendax* ('lying Greece') for which his text became notorious:

Et l'autre Hercules fut appellé Alceus filz de Amphitroron  
et Alemena. Au quel la nation grecque ha apliqué et attribué toutes les  
belles et anciennes proesses et chevalereuses entreprises en leur  
mensongieres et fabuleuses histoires es queles ils ont si doucement  
et aromonieusement chanté par fictions poetiques qu'ils on [*sic*] voulu  
exalter agrandir accroistre et magnifier seulement leur nom et ceulx  
de leur gent et nation pour dimynuer abolyr aneantir et extaindre  
l'inextimable et incomparable magnificence et magnanimité des autres [...].<sup>33</sup>

This paragraph expands the short Latin phrase in Annius' prologue, 'Et tamen Graecia mendax audet eam in historia quasi inundationem terrarum fingere', to emphasise the way in which the Greeks, through lies and legends, wished to 'glorify, extend, heighten and idealise' their own people and nation at the expense of others.<sup>34</sup> It is this sentiment which later authors exploit in re-workings of Annius' text: as R. E. Asher notes, his glorification of Italy 'involved downgrading Greece, Italy's main rival, and this in turn entailed denying that the civilisation of western Europe as a whole came from Greece'.<sup>35</sup> Thus, although the translator of Anne's text diverges from the Latin prologue and also does not engage in the promotion of France as the origin of western European culture to the same extent as Lemaire des Belges in his *Illustrations*, he nevertheless renders explicit Annius' notion of *Graecia mendax*, and forges a link between the contemporary writing of French history and the writing of the ancients.<sup>36</sup>

The prologue concludes with an invocation to 'dame grace divine', asking for her help in the writing of the work. The manuscript then continues with the five books of 'Berosus' in a translation that is closely derived from the Latin version.

### **Anne's Manuscript: Date, Context and Reception**

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<sup>33</sup> Fols 9v-10r.

<sup>34</sup> *Antiquitatum variorum*, 223.

<sup>35</sup> Asher, *National Myths*, 50.

<sup>36</sup> Stephens notes that 'Lemaire succeeds [...] in transforming Gaul into the first postdiluvian home of the arts and letters in Europe'; see 'Counterfeit and Fictive Editors', 233.

So how does Anne's manuscript relate to Annius' popularity in France and the dissemination of the *Antiquities* in the early sixteenth century? And as a gift, what might it then tell us about Anne's own literary interests and her marriage to Pierre de Balsac? The two questions are, in a sense, interlinked. Let us look first in more detail at the dating of Anne's manuscript since this will help to situate it in relation to Anne's relationship with Pierre and also to Lemaire des Belges' *Illustrations*. The commented edition on which the Preface of Anne's manuscript partly relies was first printed in France in 1512 but internal evidence suggests the manuscript was made prior to this publication. The Christie's sale notice dates the manuscript to 1505-1506 and the *Flowering of Medieval French Literature* catalogue to 1506 'or a little after', based on the notion that since the translator of the *Chaldean Histories* does not name himself, the manuscript was likely a gift 'during [Pierre's] period of courtship with Anne in order to affirm his love for her and convince her to wed him'.<sup>37</sup> The prologue's reference to the book as providing comfort for the 'great and unmerited mourning' and 'trouble and tribulation' that Anne has been suffering has also been evoked in support of a date prior to their marriage, which was opposed by Anne's father. However, I would venture that the problems referred to relate more plausibly to those that Anne encountered *as a result* of her union with Pierre.

After the couple married in 1507, Louis de Gravelle took out legal proceedings against Pierre for 'cas d'excès, rapt, crimes, delictz, et malefices' and subsequently disinherited his daughter.<sup>38</sup> In 1510 an agreement between Anne and her father saw Anne renounce her inheritance in return for 10,000 *écus d'or* and 1000 *livres de rente*. Two years later, in 1513, Louis accused his daughter of forging letters that placed her back in the succession. Archival documents indicate that Louis de Gravelle continued to revise his will up until his death in 1516 and Anne's inheritance was only settled a few years later when, in September 1518, an agreement was reached between Anne and the children of her sister Lousie, notably her nephew Louis de Vendôme.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Christie's sale notice and *Flowering of Medieval French Literature*, 175. The idea that the manuscript was made during their courtship ultimately derives from Montmorand, *Une femme poète*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> Montmorand cites a document (Archives nationales, Parlement criminel, X<sup>2</sup>, A66, fol. 157) relating to the criminal proceedings taken by the Admiral against Pierre de Balsac and others in relation to his marriage with Anne. This is dated 27 January 1508 (new system) suggesting that the couple were married in 1507. See Montmorand, *Une femme poète*, 64 and n. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Montmorand, *Une femme poète*, 76-78; 81-84. The *procès* is noted in Paul Marichal, *Catalogue des actes de François Ier*, 9 vols (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1887-1908), I, 151; available online <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57203090> (Accessed November 2014). Several of Anne's manuscripts bear the date 1518 and the inscription 'de la succession du feu monseigneur l'amiral'.

The frontispiece miniature in the *Chaldean Histories* can further help to date the manuscript. The miniature was identified in the Christie's sale notice and the *Flowering of Medieval French Literature* catalogue as being by Jean Pichore, an illuminator and printer active in France between 1502 and 1521 who produced a number of works for patrons at the French court.<sup>40</sup> Recently, however, François Avril and Isabelle Delaunay have suggested that the miniature is by Pichore's close collaborator, known as the Master of the *Chronique Scandaleuse* who was active in Paris between the early 1490s and 1510.<sup>41</sup> The Master's work has been identified in several manuscripts made for patrons at, or with connections to, the French court, including Charles VIII, Anne of Brittany, and Anne de Graville's father, Louis. The Master's work is characterised by figures with heavily drawn eyebrows, eyes that appear half closed, small, plump red lips, and fine pink tones on the cheeks as in the copy of the *Histoire de la Toison d'or* made for Anne of Brittany and to which we shall return (fig. 4).<sup>42</sup> His work can also appear to have been rapidly executed with sometimes loose or watercolour-esque modelling and often includes highlighting in gold. Such traits are evident in the *Chaldean Histories* manuscript, where the faces of the women behind Anne and even Anne herself have the characteristic eyes, mouth, and peachy cheeks; the area around Anne's right hand shows evidence of some indecision over, or sketchy approach to, this part of the drawing (fig. 1). The folds of the figures' clothes and their jewellery are also indicated by rapid gold highlights. Furthermore, as Avril has suggested, the architectural frame around the miniature and the inclusion of the putti, differ from the kind of frames found in Pichore's work in both the visual language and the execution.<sup>43</sup>

Given that the Master of the *Chronique Scandaleuse*'s activity stopped in 1510, his involvement in Anne's *Chaldean Histories* would give a *terminus ante quem* that places the manuscript between Anne and Pierre's marriage in 1507 and the end of that decade. With this in mind, we can then also assume that the translator of Anne's text was working from the 1498 *editio princeps* copy of the *Antiquities*, rather than one of the editions produced in France from 1512. Therefore by choosing this text, Pierre, and perhaps also Anne herself,

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<sup>40</sup> Notably the *Remèdes de l'une et l'autre Fortune de Pétrarque* for Louis XII (Paris, BnF f. fr. 225) and a copy of Octovien de Saint-Gelais' translation of the *Heroides* for Louise of Savoy (Paris, BnF, ms fr. 873).

<sup>41</sup> Personal correspondence (24/10/2014); the Master was identified and baptised as such by François Avril and Nicole Reynaud after his work in Paris, BnF, ms. Clair. 481); see their *Manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440-1520* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1993), 274.

<sup>42</sup> Guillaume Filastre, *Histoire de la Toison d'Or* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 138); the Master's work also appears in a manuscript containing five of Ovid's *Heroides* and the debate of the *Dame sans sy* (Paris, Musée des lettres et manuscrits) for Anne of Brittany, to be discussed below, in a frontispiece miniature in Vérard's edition of the *Golden Legend* for Charles VIII (Paris, BnF, Vélins 689) and, with the Master of Jacques de Besançon, in the *Fleur des Histoires* made for Louis de Graville (Besançon, BM, ms 851).

<sup>43</sup> Personal correspondence (24/10/2014).

appear to have been tuned into an emerging historiographical-literary trend that would take off in France a few more years down the line. Furthermore, based on this dating, Anne's manuscript would have been in production around the same time that Lemaire des Belges was working on his *Illustrations* although the two texts were written in different contexts and for very different purposes.

The genesis of the *Illustrations* was a long and complicated affair. Lemaire des Belges claimed to have begun his oeuvre in 1500 and was certainly revising it in 1509 while employed as *indiciaire* and *historiographe* to Margaret of Austria to whom the first book was dedicated.<sup>44</sup> Stephens suggests that Lemaire des Belges added the Annian sections to his work not earlier than 1506, and probably in 1508.<sup>45</sup> Given these dates, we can also assume that, like Anne's translator, he knew Annius' work from the Roman edition of 1498. However, in 1511 Lemaire des Belges sought patronage at the French court, becoming *historiographe de la reine*, Anne of Brittany. Books two and three of the *Illustrations*, published in 1512 and 1513, were dedicated to her daughter Claude and to Anne respectively.<sup>46</sup> Lemaire des Belges' text was thus conceived in the Low Countries and intended as a piece of flattering propaganda – and as means to promote and secure his own position – to be circulated in the relatively new medium of print, first for the Regent of the Netherlands, then for the French queen and her heir. By contrast, Anne de Graville's text was a highly personalised, manuscript, production including an individualised portrait of her illuminated by a prominent artist popular at the French court.

There is no evidence to suppose that Pierre or Anne necessarily knew about Lemaire's work: as the first book of the *Illustrations* was not printed until 1511, and as Lemaire des Belges did not begin working for Anne of Brittany until this date, his work may not have circulated outside Margaret's court before then. Thus, although both texts thus bear witness to the availability of the *Antiquities* north of the Alps, Anne's manuscript appears as novel gift, conceived independently of, and finished earlier than, Lemaire des Belges' undertaking. Furthermore, as we have seen in the discussion of the prologue so far, the text of the manuscript offered to Anne is less concerned with the refashioning and promotion of France's origins than it is with appealing to the recipient.

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<sup>44</sup> Rothstein, 'Jean Lemaire des Belges', 599.

<sup>45</sup> Stephens, 'Counterfeit and Fictive Editors', 214.

<sup>46</sup> The change of court and patron meant that Lemaire des Belges had to adapt his project to suit his new patron and he did this through subtle changes in the titles of each edition; see Rothstein, 'Jean Lemaire des Belges', 598-99.

Let us now return to the second question posed at the start of this section: why might Pierre have chosen to have this text in particular translated and offered as a ‘love token’ to his wife, and what does it tell us about Anne’s literary interests? Considering the manuscript’s decoration and the dedications to Anne in more detail will help us to answer this question and to understand this manuscript as a personal gift that not only embodied Pierre’s love for his wife and flattered her intellect but also served to craft Anne’s own learning and taste.

### **Inspired by Love**

As noted above, the opening miniature and dedicatory prologue of the *Chaldean Histories* clearly indicate that the seated woman receiving the book from a disembodied hand guided by cupid is Anne de Grville. The other mottos on these first pages show that the book – and the ‘author’ himself – is intended only for Anne: ‘à autre non’ (to no-one else), ‘à non plus’ (to no other) and ‘à amour’ (for love) play on the preposition à and Anne’s initial. These *jeux de mots* are also apparent at book and divisions throughout the manuscript (figs 2 and 3) meaning that as Anne worked her way through the book, she would not only have seen herself pictured receiving it at the very start, but have been reminded at regular intervals throughout of the author’s dedication to and love for her.

Reinforcing the visual elements of the author’s commitment to Anne are the prologue and epilogue. The prologue, already quoted in some detail above, indicates that the ‘author’ has taken the trouble ‘which was a great pleasure to me, to simplify this present Berosian history, newly translated from the Chaldean language into Latin, and to write it in the vernacular out of love and honour for you’. In doing so, he aims to give Anne’s ‘eyes some respite and to relieve your heart through gentle solace’ in the face of the unjustified suffering she is undergoing.<sup>47</sup> It appears, moreover, that the author/translator/Pierre did not act alone in executing the task: the book which was being translated, as well as Love itself, were active agents in the creation of this gift. First, as the author set to work, the book in front of his eyes ‘humbled itself and making a humble request begged me hard that I would dedicate this book to you’. Seemingly unsure of his abilities, the ‘author’ is then aided by Love ‘who is the driving force behind this work’ who ‘[taking] this request into his own hands’ declares ‘let it be done’.<sup>48</sup> The book, then, appears to have an almost supernatural element to its genesis, a sense also conveyed in the frontispiece by the hand holding the book which descends from the cloud, guided by Cupid, Love’s representative.

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<sup>47</sup> Fol. 5r

<sup>48</sup> Fols 5r-6r.

Love's role in the making of the book and its value for the author is reiterated in the epilogue where the author states:

Je fais fin à ce present oeuvre le quel combien qu'il soit brief et petit si est il de grant poix et consequence. Et ne l'eusse jamais entrepris ne pris la peine de le coucher en langue vulgaire et maternelle car je m'en scay tresmal ayder si ce n'euste esté amour qui est vainqueur de toutes choses lequel m'a commandé ainsi le faire, pour l'honneur de vous ma damoiselle à qui je suis du tout voué pour vos nobles et grandes vertus incomparables. Et si le lengaige est rude et mal aourné vostre bon plaisir sera le corriger et y employer du vostre, qui est sur tous doux benign et gracieulx. En vous suppliant humblement que veuilliez le petit present prendre pour agreable, et ne consideres pas la petitesse ou peu de valeur du don mais le bon et parfait couraige cordial et entier vouloir de celui qui le vous offre comme à celle à qui du tout il est à veult demourer pour jamais et aultre non voustre humble et obeissant. Cy finit le livre d'amour le quel a voulu estre ainsy nommé parce que amour ha induyt l'acteur et commandé le faire.

Here the author also suggests that should the recipient find the language 'rough and lacking in elegance' she might take pleasure in correcting it with her own, since her own language is 'sweet, gentle and gracious'. Although Anne's two surviving literary works for Claude were not produced until 1515 and 1521, we have here a preliminary hint at Anne's own interest in language, her literary talents and later achievements which, some years later, were praised by Geoffroy Tory in his *Champ Fleury*.<sup>49</sup>

The *Chaldean Histories* appears, then, to be more than a love token from husband to wife. Pierre's decision to offer Anne this personalised, singular, translation of the Berosus books into French may not only have been a measure of the esteem in which Pierre held Anne's intellect but may also have been chosen to meet or to encourage Anne's particular interests in literature and translation. Moreover, through the choice of text and illuminator, the manuscript is clearly anchored in an emerging literary and artistic culture at the French court, one to which Anne de Graville would later contribute through her works and personal book collection. Thus, as I shall argue in the final section, Pierre's 'love book' was a conscious attempt to valorise Anne on a number of levels – as his wife, as a woman with

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<sup>49</sup> 'Et pour monstrier que nostre dict langage françois a grace quant il est bien ordonné, j'en allegueray icy en passant un rondeau que une femme d'excellence en vertus, ma dame d'Entraigues, a faict et composé' ; Geoffroy Tory, *Champ fleury*, ed. by J.W. Joliffe (Paris, La Haye: Mouton Éditeur, 1970; repr. 1529 edition), f.4r.



intellectual and bibliophilic interests, and perhaps as someone looking to associate herself with, and perhaps gain the protection of, the French court during a turbulent personal period.

### **The *Chaldean Histories* in a Courtly and Personal Context**

I have suggested that the *Chaldean Histories* be dated between 1507 and 1510. This means it was probably one of the first books that Anne owned and is certainly one of the first made specifically for her. As a French version of a Latin translation of a supposedly even older source, it fits into a courtly literary trend that privileged vernacular editions and translations. Such a trend is also evident in Anne's own works and the acquisitions she made for her library: books in Anne's possession included a French translation of the *Triumphs* of Petrarch which also presented extracts from the original Italian alongside the French.<sup>50</sup> She also owned two translations of Marco Polo and a copy of Boccaccio's *Des cas nobles hommes et femmes*.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, a similar 'layering' of the *remaniement* found in the *Chaldean Histories* occurs in Anne's own *Rondeaux* and *Beau roman* which were themselves also adaptations and 'translations' of older texts. For instance, in the *Rondeaux* Anne indicates that she judges the *Belle dame sans mercy* to be the best of Chartier's works that she has read. In so doing, 'elle se situe dans la tradition médiévale puis humaniste de la *translatio studii*'.<sup>52</sup> Further attention is drawn to the notion of translation and rewriting through the mise-en-page of the only surviving copy of the *Rondeaux* where Anne's text is presented in parallel with Chartier's original. The two are thus textually and visually in direct dialogue in a format that encourages comparison and debate. A different kind of rewriting might be observed in the *Beau roman*. The source for this text, Boccaccio's *Teseida*, was set in the time of Theseus, founder of Athens, and thus in a period central to the history of Ancient Greece. In this work, Anne re-orientated the story of Palamon, Arcita and Emilia towards the French court, updating it with allusions to the meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold and describing the two heroes in terms that evoked the two kings.<sup>53</sup> We might speculate that the subtle re-workings that Anne brought to the *Beau roman* were shaped by her knowledge first of the criticisms levelled against *Graecia mendax* in Annus and perhaps

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<sup>50</sup> See note 16.

<sup>51</sup> See note 16; the location of Anne's copy of Boccaccio's *Des cas nobles hommes et femmes*, translated by Laurent de Premierfait is now unknown (formerly Schøyen Collection MS 268, then acquired by Günther Rare Books in 2010). Another copy of Marco Polo, Paris, BnF, naf 1880 was also in her possession.

<sup>52</sup> Müller, 'Anne de Graville lectrice de *Maistre Allain*: Pour une réécriture stratégie de la *Belle dame sans mercy*', in *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime*, ed. Isabelle Brouand-Arends (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 231-41 (232).

<sup>53</sup> See L'Estrange, 'Re-Presenting Emilia', n. 37.

by her familiarity, later, with Lemaire des Belges' *Illustrations*, which she may well have encountered while at Claude's court, in which France was clearly favoured over Greece.

One ancient text that was given a new lease of life in the vernacular at the end of the fifteenth century was Ovid's *Heroides*, a collection of twenty-one epistles written by love-lorn classical heroines, translated into French by Octovien de Saint-Gelais. Although originally produced for Charles VIII, the *Heroides* was particularly appreciated amongst female readers at the French court and its popularity also inspired contemporary authors 'to compose their own Heroidean style epistles'.<sup>54</sup> Two such epistles by Clément Marot and Macé de Villebresme are bound in the presentation copy of Anne de Graville's *Beau roman*, and complement the emphasis given to appropriate female behaviour in that text.<sup>55</sup> Saint-Gelais was not the first author, however, to make Ovid's *Heroides* available in the vernacular: a partial French translation was embedded into the second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, the oldest copy of which dates to the first half of the fourteenth century and which focuses on the history of Troy.<sup>56</sup> Although this redaction was less popular than the original text – surviving in only thirteen manuscripts – it was clearly of interest to Anne's parents, perhaps specifically to her mother, since a copy dated 1467 is liberally decorated with the Graville arms and the impaled Graville-Balsac arms.<sup>57</sup> Anne acquired this copy, in which nearly every epistle is accompanied by a miniature of the woman writing or despatching her letter, as part of her inheritance and we might suppose that she was already familiar with the manuscript and thus the early *Heroides* translations when it was part of her parents' library.

A selection of five of Saint-Gelais' translations of the *Heroides* – which Cynthia Brown has noted 'present the most desperate complaints' – were included in a manuscript made specifically for Anne of Brittany and decorated by the Master of the *Chronique Scandaleuse* who also produced the frontispiece of Anne's *Chaldean Histories*. This manuscript dates from around 1492 and also includes two French poems concerning the 'the legal judgement about the unique beauty of the so-called *Dame sans sy* and the subsequent appeal against this

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<sup>54</sup> See Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Proliferating Narratives: Texts, Images, and (Mostly Female) Dedictees in a Few *Héroïdes* Productions', in Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (eds), *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French Culture* (see note 9); Yvonne LeBlanc, 'Queen Anne in the Lonely, Tear-Soaked Bed of Penelope: Rewriting the *Heroides* in Sixteenth Century France', in *The Late Medieval Epistle*, ed. by Carol Poster and Richard J. Utz (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1996), 71-88.

<sup>55</sup> Arsenal 5116; see L'Estrange, 'Re-Presenting Emilia', 195.

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of the text's genesis and surviving manuscripts, see *Les Epistres des dames de Grèce: une version médiévale en prose française des Héroïdes d'Ovide*, ed. by Luca Barbieri (Paris: Champion, 2007). See also Paul White, *Renaissance Postscripts: Responding to Ovid's Heroides in Sixteenth Century France* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), especially Chapter 4 'The *Heroides* in Translation', 144-86.

<sup>57</sup> Paris, BnF ms fr. 254; see also Deldicque 'Bibliophiles de mère en fille'.

verdict by the ladies in Anne of Brittany's entourage'.<sup>58</sup> As Brown notes, the topic of the *Dame sans sy* poems 'resonate[s] with the [...] literary trial associated with Alain Chartier's *Belle Dame sans mercy*', the text which Anne herself would rework at Claude's request.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the *Dame sans sy* manuscript also contains an epitaph on the death of one Madame de Balsac. This was Marie de Montberon, wife of Geoffroy de Balsac, Anne's maternal uncle, who died in 1492.<sup>60</sup> Although it is impossible to say whether Anne de Graville knew of this manuscript, family connections and her own position at Claude's court means that she may well have been aware of the debate poems and the Epitaph written about her aunt, especially since these were also reproduced at least twice in both manuscript and printed form.<sup>61</sup>

The decoration of the *Chaldean Histories* by the Master of the Chronique Scandaleuse, an artist associated in particular with a manuscript made for the Queen and lamenting the death of Anne's aunt, also links it to courtly – and specifically female bibliophilic – circles. The frontispiece not only places Anne at the centre of Pierre's affections – surrounded as she is by his declarations of love 'à autre non' – but also presents her as a learned, authorial persona, with a clear visual connection to the French court.

Traditional presentation scenes show the author kneeling and extending a copy of his/her work to the recipient as we see Anne doing in Claude's copy of the *Beau roman* (fig. 5) In the *Chaldean Histories*, however, the 'author' is absent and the book is instead offered by a disembodied hand emerging from a cloud. This ethereal gesture not only reiterates the declaration in the prologue that the book was actually the work of Love itself but also means that the focus of the miniature is displaced on to Anne alone. Here, she takes centre stage, filling a substantial proportion of the frame. Anne's style and colour of dress and headdress, as well as those of the women behind her, recall the Breton fashion introduced at the French court by Anne of Brittany and which she is frequently depicted wearing as, for instance in the

<sup>58</sup> Now in the Musée des lettres et manuscrits, Paris; see Brown, *The Queen's Library*, 186-87 where it is referred to as the Breslauer manuscript.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, *The Queen's Library*, 187.

<sup>60</sup> H. Lamarque in his article 'Autour d'Anne de Graville: Le Débat de la "Dame sans sy" et l'épithaphe de la poëtesse', *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V.-L. Saulnier* (Geneva: Droz, 1984), 603-611 argues that the Mme de Balsac is Anne herself but this is not possible based on the dates.

<sup>61</sup> In addition to the manuscript discussed here, the texts are reproduced in a manuscript that is bound with a printed edition of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, Paris, BnF, Vélins 2231. See Eugénie Droz, 'Notice sur un manuscrit ignoré de la Bibliothèque Nationale', *Romania*, 45 (1918-19), 503-13 who also notes that *L'Arrest de la louange* appears alone in Paris, BnF fr. 2206 (fol. 195). The printed edition is *Le recueil des espistres d'Ovide traduit en françois o vray, ligne pour ligne, faisans mencion de cinq loyalles amoureuses...* Paris, BnF, Yc 1567, undated; available on Gallica <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb325023851> (Accessed November 2014).

frontispiece of the *Histoire de la Toison d'Or*, noted above (fig. 4).<sup>62</sup> The *Toison d'Or* manuscript provides other visual links to the Graville miniature, such as the positioning of Anne of Brittany's hands, especially her left hand, the disembodied hand emerging from the blue cloud supported by angelic figures with wings, and the use of scrolls, mottos and initials. For instance, the S and the A in the margins of this manuscript have been interpreted as references to Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII whose symbols included the closed 'S', or *fermesse*. The motto at the bottom of the page, 'à se me rends pour jamais à' involves a similar play on letters as those found in the *Chaldean Histories*. As Brown notes 'To S (that is, Charles VIII), A (that is, Anne) gives herself forever'.<sup>63</sup> Brown argues that in this representation of Anne of Brittany with the Virtues, the queen 'stages and performs her life, with her own symbols providing additional details about her queenship'.<sup>64</sup> In the same way, Anne de Graville is also being 'staged' in the *Chaldean Histories*' miniature – not only as the revered love object of Pierre and the recipient of this book inspired by Love but also as a woman in her own right in a visual and material schema that links her to the patronage of the French court and, specifically, to its women. This link is reinforced by the group of people, led by women, who enter the room behind Anne and who recall the largely female entourage who frequently accompany depictions of Anne and Claude in their own manuscripts.<sup>65</sup> However, whereas Brown notes that Anne of Brittany's 'persona is in the end inextricably intertwined with the king's throughout the [*Toison d'Or*] manuscript', Anne de Graville here dominates in her own right: the prominence of Anne's own motto 'J'en garde un leal' trumps those of Pierre and the focus on Anne is further reinforced by the Graville-only arms in the bas-de-page. Pierre's self-effacement in both image and text – he is visually absent and he never names himself – puts Anne centre stage.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, Anne de Graville's manuscript of the *Chaldean Histories* comprises a translation into French of part of Annianus' *Antiquities* that likely predates the much freer adaptation published by Lemaire des Belges. Furthermore, the combination of this text together with the dedications and decorations suggest that this book was designed not only as

<sup>62</sup> Paris, BnF, ms fr. 138. On the dating of this manuscript and its connection to Anne of Brittany, see Brown, pp. 15-18 and nn. 1-3.

<sup>63</sup> Brown, *The Queen's Library*, 18.

<sup>64</sup> Brown, *The Queen's Library*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> In addition to the presentation miniature of the *Beau roman* see also the depictions of Anne and her ladies-in-waiting in the *Epistres de Poètes royaux* (St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F. v. XIV, 8) and the *Voyage de Gênes* by Jean Marot (Paris, BnF, fr. 5091).

a gift representing Pierre de Balsac's love and an acknowledgement of the unfair suffering their union had entailed, but also to appeal to Anne as a woman with an interest in books, in translation and in literature, and with a growing familiarity with the French court. In this sense, I have argued, it functioned as a key work in Anne's collection that drew attention – visually and textually – to her erudition and her own interest in language. It thus pre-empted, and helped to shape, her future book collecting and her own literary pursuits under the patronage of Claude.