



PRESS RELEASE
Become a Patron!
8th Crowdfunding Campaign
 October 24, 2017–February 15, 2018

Become a Patron!

Of King François I's Book of Hours

A historic acquisition that will bring an outstanding artwork back to France

This book of hours (prayer book), a manuscript bound in gold and precious stones, is an unparalleled treasure of French precious metalwork. It was presented by King François I to his niece Jeanne d'Albret, who was raised under his guardianship at the French court. Small prayers books were everyday objects, but this one is remarkably elaborate. Its later owners included King Henri IV and Cardinal Mazarin.

King François I's Book of Hours is a unique vestige of the treasures of the House of Valois, dispersed in their entirety over the centuries. The book became the property of collectors in England in the early 18th century; its acquisition by the Louvre, for a total of around 10 million euros, would bring this Renaissance masterpiece back to France.

Thanks to the exceptional generosity of LVMH Moët Hennessy—Louis Vuitton, half of the required sum has already been obtained. On October 15, the Musée du Louvre launched a major crowdfunding campaign aimed at individuals and companies in the hope of raising 1 million euros before February 15.

The book of hours is presented within the framework of the exhibition *François I and Dutch Art* (October 18, 2017–January 15, 2018).

This unique masterpiece, listed as a French National Treasure, has been put up for sale by its London owner. In order to add it to the French national collections, the Louvre must raise 8 million pounds (about 10 million euros).

The museum is therefore appealing to public generosity with a new *Become a Patron!* crowdfunding campaign intended to raise 1 million euros before February 15, 2018.

LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton is actively committed to the success of the campaign; its generous donation of 5 million euros means that half the required sum is already secured. To reach the full amount, the museum is now targeting its fundraising efforts at major donors and the corporate community.

An artwork of great rarity

The collections of museums both in France and abroad have no equivalent of *King François I's Book of Hours*. Apart from the Benvenuto Cellini's salt cellar in Vienna, it is the only piece of precious metalwork directly associated with this king and is, to date, the only known precious French book binding from the reigns of François I and the last Valois kings.



King François I's Book of Hours © S.J Philips

Find out more about the campaign
www.tousmecenes.fr

With the generous support of
 LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton



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This tiny handwritten prayer book (8.5 x 6.5 cm) is decorated with sixteen full-page painted illustrations and numerous illuminated initials. It can be dated thanks to the date 1532 that appears in its ornamentation.

King François I's Book of Hours is a masterpiece of precious metalwork from the reign of François I. With its enameled gold binding, embellished with precious stones and two large, intaglio-engraved, oval carnelian plaques, it is also a monument to the jeweler's art.

A new appeal to public patronage for this historic acquisition

Previous *Become a Patron!* campaigns have garnered strong support and demonstrated people's interest in contributing, according to their means, to the enrichment of the Louvre's collections. The 2016 campaign mobilized some 3,700 donors who raised a total of €670,000. This eighth rendezvous will further strengthen the relationship between the museum and the public.

Game: #GoFrançoisGo

Internet users can play a game called #GoFrançoisGo, in which players must help François I put his book of hours together again and make his way to Chambord. Those who wish can take part in a draw to win a stay at Chambord, offered by our partners the Château de Chambord and the Relais de Chambord.

www.tousmecenes.fr

How to make a donation

Before February 15, 2018:

-online at www.donate.louvre.fr

-by check, sent by post together with the form downloaded from www.tousmecenes.fr.

A major tax deduction

For French tax residents: regardless of the amount, 66% of your donation is eligible for an income tax deduction (up to 20% of your taxable income). Companies can also claim a significant deduction on their corporate tax.

The Louvre thanks its donors

All donors or the person of their choice will be acknowledged as patrons of the campaign on www.tousmecenes.fr and in the museum near the artwork.

For €30 or more (or €10.20 after tax deduction), donors will receive an invitation for two people to discover the work.

For €200 or more (or €68 after tax deduction), donors will be invited to a private viewing of the work on a Tuesday, the day the museum is closed to the public, (invitation valid for two people).

For €350 or more (or €119 after tax deduction), donors will also benefit from the Amis du Louvre card for a year.

For €500 or more (or €170 after tax deduction), donors will be invited to an exclusive evening reception during which they will be able to admire *King François I's Book of Hours* (invitation valid for two people), and they will also benefit from the Amis du Louvre card.



King François I's Book of Hours (detail) © S.J Philips

Key figures from previous campaigns

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of 7,200 donors in 2010, the Musée du Louvre raised the €1,260,000 required for the acquisition of *The Three Graces*, painted by Lucas Cranach.

In 2011, the museum reaped €500,000 from 1,900 generous donors to restore and reassemble two treasures of Cairene architecture for the opening of the Department of Islamic Art.

In 2012, 4,500 donors succeeded in raising the €800,000 required for the purchase one of the two ivory statuettes the museum lacked to complete its medieval *Descent from the Cross* collection.

In 2013, some 6,700 donors raised a million euros for the conservation of the museum's iconic *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, and the renovation of the monumental staircase that serves as its setting.

For the 2014 campaign, over 4,500 donors contributed €800,000 for the acquisition of the *Breteuil Table*, also known as the *Teschen Table*.

In 2015, *Cupid Testing One of his Arrows* by Jacques Saly (1717–76) joined the collections of the Department of Sculptures thanks to the generosity of over 4,300 donors, whose contributions amounted to nearly €680,000.

In 2016, 3,700 donors raised the €670,000 required to reconstruct the mastaba chapel of Akhetep.

The Book of Hours of François I and Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre.

Outstanding ornamentation

A book of hours was an everyday prayer book that people carried around with them. Dated to 1532, this book of hours and calendar, entirely handwritten in elegant calligraphy, is decorated with sixteen full-page painted illustrations in classical gilt frames, and three smaller paintings with decorative borders.

The paintings accompany and illustrate the different parts of the text:

- The Gospel according to St. John: St. John at Patmos
- The Hours of the Virgin: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Angels, the Flight into Egypt, the Coronation of the Virgin
- The Penitential Psalms and Lauds: King David in Penitence, Bathsheba, Bathsheba at Her Bath
- Office for the Dead: Death, the Destruction of the Temple
- Various offices: Christ Carrying the Cross, the Crucifixion, Pentecost, the Trinity.

A one-of-a-kind binding

The paintings in this book are very beautiful, but the binding best reflects the luxurious tastes of François I and the last Valois kings. Two large, intaglio-carved carnelian ovals surrounded by four cherub's heads adorn the front and back cover, which are decorated with enamel arabesques and studded with rubies and turquoises. The gold-covered edges are also adorned with arabesques in black enamel. The clasp is decorated with a large faceted tourmaline gem, and the gold-covered spine, with enameled scrolls resembling false bands, is studded with rows of alternating ruby and turquoise cabochons.

The bookmark that accompanies this luxury artifact is an extraordinary jewel in itself. Designed like a column set with rubies and turquoises, it has a volute capital and a molded base from which a pearl hangs.

The dazzling artistry of the gold, enamel and precious stone work and perfect mastery of materials and colors make this book of hours a masterpiece of French Renaissance precious metalwork from the reign of François I. Apart from a casket (now in the Louvre) produced in 1532–1533 by Pierre Mangot, gold and silversmith to François I, few comparable pieces of precious metalwork have survived.

The unusually large engraved carnelians and the figure of Christ carved in half-round relief on the bookmark recall the work of the finest Italian artists of Rome and Lombardy, while the ruby and turquoise decoration evokes Ottoman precious metalwork, on which these two stones were often used in alternating patterns during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. The latter, who became sultan in 1520, allied with François I against the Hapsburgs in 1536, after several treaties and embassies involving the exchange of gifts.

From the French Royal Collections to a London Antique Dealer

King François I purchased this book of hours from the jeweler Allart Plommyer on January 2, 1538. François I then gave this treasure to his niece, Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre (1528–72) and mother of Henri IV. On Jeanne d'Albret's death in 1572, the masterpiece was inherited by Henri IV, King of France and Navarre. This Renaissance jewel passed then into Cardinal Mazarin's collections, where it was duly recorded in an inventory drawn up after his death in 1661. In the early 18th century, the book of hours left France to join the collection of Richard Mead, a renowned British doctor and great art-lover. François I's treasure was exhibited in his London museum until the death of its owner in 1754. The famous collector Horace Walpole purchased the book of hours on Richard Mead's death and mentioned it specifically in his description of his villa, Strawberry Hill House, in 1784. He placed it in the Tribune, amongst the most valuable treasures in his collection. The work subsequently entered the collection of his great-niece, Elizabeth Laura, Countess Waldegrave, and was then left to her descendants before being sold in 1842. Alfred de Rothschild purchased the book and later handed it on to his daughter Almina Herbert, Countess of Carnarvon (1876–1969). The work was then sold at Christie's, London, on May 19, 1925. Having passed through several hands, this Renaissance jewel was sold for the last time in London, on March 26, 1942, to Martin Norton (of S.J. Philips Ltd.).